A Brief and Incomplete History of the Churches of Coloma 1847 to 1969

A Reference for Researchers

Jeff Lee and Mike Okey

2025

Second Edition

Note for researchers,

This second edition contains new material not available during the Covid period. Please use this edition as a starting point for your research.

Having utilized internet archives, historic publications, and having reached out to the various church archives, this history should serve as a base resource for those interested in pursuing the history of the Churches of Coloma.

While highlighting some of the key facts and interesting stories, this work was never intended to be a scholarly endeavor, but more as a framework for others to build upon.

As more documents become available on the Internet, discoveries will be made to be added to this history. Hopefully, photos that have not been in the public domain will also be published.

This project should allow the researcher a starting foundation for compiling a more complete story for each denomination, its members, and clergy.

A compendium of the research notes and documents that were referenced in this document is available at the Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park Library. While indexed by the specific Church they may not be in any rational order even though an attempt has been made to do so.

We recommend the following books for anyone beginning research:

Churches of El Dorado County California, Will O. Upton, 1940

The Life and Work of Reverend C. C. Peirce, Charles Elmer Upton, 1903

God's Gold, The Story of Baptist Beginnings in California, Stanford Fleming, 1949

Men Who Dug for Gold and Men Who Preached for God, Irving Engle, 1973

Blacks in Gold Rush California, Randolf Lapp, 1977

The Early Days of my Episcopate, William Kip, 1892

Centennial Encyclopedia of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Richard Wright, 1916.

Fifty Years of Methodism, C. V. Anthony, 1901

Images of America, Coloma, Betty Sederquist, Arcadia Publishing, 2012.

Prior to the organization of churches in Coloma and between the winter of 1848 and the spring of 1849 James W. Marshall writes in his diary,

"Quite in Contrast to the noise and din of the main street would be a crowd of miners jamming the doorway and sash-less windows of an unfinished house while attentively listening to a good sermon being delivered by a preacher wearing ragged clothing. Before closing with benediction, he announced, "There will be divine service in this house next Sabbath-if, in the meantime, I hear of no new diggings!"[1]

E. S. Hall and wife Catherine, both managers of the Rodgers Hotel in Coloma from 1850 to 1853, later mused about their lives in Coloma. He wrote the following about religion in Coloma.[2]

"Gold was God, and crowds of gamblers and miners filled our streets. Profane oaths were the common vocabulary, and upon our sidewalks various gambling games in every part of the town were continually going on. No sound of the church-going bells called our minds back to the Sabbath days of our childhood home in the Pilgrim land of our fathers, where our heavenly father is revered and worshipped as the guiding star of earthly life, crowned with bright visions of a celestial paradise beyond the grave."

This document is also available in high resolution for free download or viewing at www.archive.org. Any significant updates will be published at archive.org as an amendment.

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A Brief and Incomplete History of the Churches of Coloma

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Chapter 1

AFRICAN METHODIST CHURCH

(AME CHURCH)

Coloma (AME) African Methodist Church Timeline

1856

- Established in by Reverend T.M.D. Ward of San Francisco.
- Prior to 1861 the Black population was administered to by the white Methodist Episcopal Church.

1861

- Reverend Peter Killingsworth was assigned to El Dorado County Circuit.
- Visits by Reverend Jacob Miller of the Stockton Circuit.

1862

- Members meeting at the Placerville Methodist Episcopal Church to plan a celebration for the Emancipation of the British West Indies.

1863

- Jacob Johnson donates two lots to the African Methodist Church on Lower Main Street.

1863

- Elder Jacob Mitchell visits El Dorado County.
- Elder Jennifer is appointed to the El Dorado Circuit.

1864

- Reverend Killingsworth reports six church members and seven Sunday school members with one teacher in Coloma.

1865

- Bishop Campbell preaches a sermon in Coloma.
- The Placerville AME church and circuit parsonage burns.

- Reverend Killingsworth is assigned to the Petaluma Circuit.
- AME trustees of Placerville sell the church lots.
- Elder William Offer replaces Elder Jenifer, and the circuit is expanded to include Placerville, Grass Valley, Yuba City and Marysville.

1868

- No African Methodist Episcopal Church services are recorded in El Dorado County.

1869

- Rufus Burgess is documented as living on a portion of the African Methodist Church property.

1879

- George Ingham purchases the remaining African Methodist Church lot at an El Dorado County lien sale.
- Rufus Burgess is deeded title to a portion of the African Methodist Church property from the El Dorado County recorder.
- George Ingham sells the African Methodist Church lot to Rufus Burgess.

1949

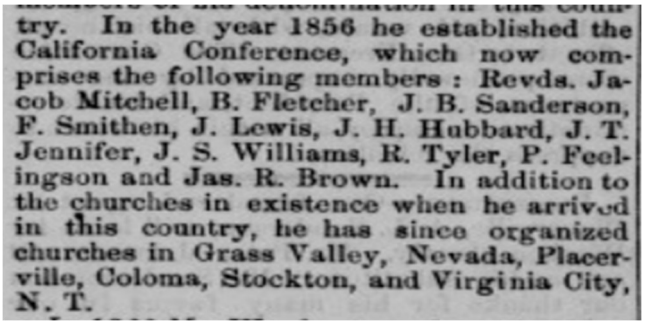
- The two lots originally donated to the African Methodist Church were sold to the State of California under condemnation action for inclusion into the Marshall Gold Discovery State Park.

African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church

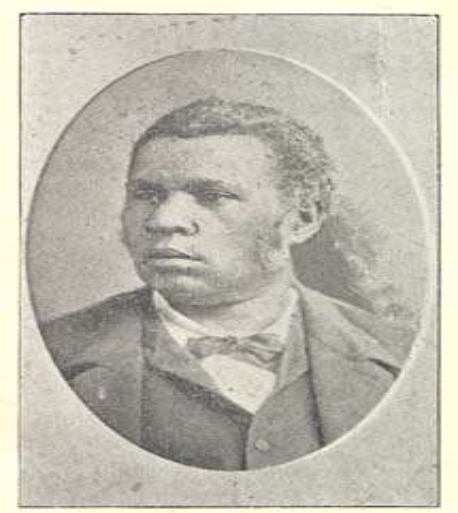
There is little written about the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Coloma, something that is common in the search for documents or facts surrounding Coloma's early history. Hopefully, a photo of this church will one day surface.

> *"There was a Negro Methodist Church at Coloma in the early days. It stood near the De Lory place on a part of the Julian property. But every vestige has long since disappeared."*[1]

The first mention of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Coloma is found in the *Pacific Appeal* newspaper in June 1863[2].


try. In the year 1856 he established the California Conference, which now comprises the following members : Revds. Jacob Mitchell, B. Fletcher, J. B. Sanderson, F. Smithen, J. Lewis, J. H. Hubbard, J. T. Jennifer, J. S. Williams, R. Tyler, P. Feelingson and Jas. R. Brown. In addition to the churches in existence when he arrived in this country, he has since organized churches in Grass Valley, Nevada, Placerville, Coloma, Stockton, and Virginia City, N. T.

The newspaper reported that in or soon after 1856 there had been African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Churches established in Placerville and Coloma, according to the Reverend T.M.D Ward, Missionary to California and the West.[3] There were no assigned preachers to the El Dorado circuit until 1861.



Bishop T. M. D. Ward, D D.

4

One should note that with all religions, the establishment of a church does not necessarily mean a structure was constructed, but a fellowship or following was established. This was also the case with the early African Methodist Episcopal Churches in Coloma and Placerville and other locations in El Dorado County.

Prior to 1861 the Black population was ministered to by the white Methodist Episcopal ministers in the Placerville-Coloma Circuit as reported in the "Minutes of the Third Quarterly Conference of the Coloma Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, held in Uniontown, April 20, 1861", Methodist Archives, Berkeley, CA.

> *Excerpt from Sept. 6, 2000, Congressional Record by the Honorable Robert T. Matsui restating the history of the St. Andrews AME Church in Sacramento that was established in 1850 by Reverend Ward and Barney Fletcher with the help of Isaac*

Owen, a white Methodist Reverend who also established the white Methodist Episcopal Church in Coloma.[5]

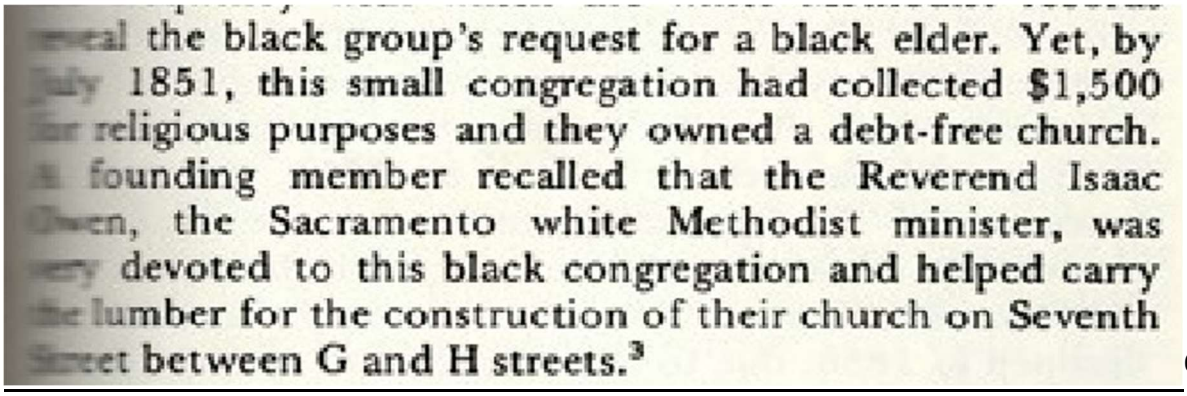
saluting this monumental achievement.

St. Andrew's was founded in 1850, three months before California was admitted as the 31st state to the Union. It is the first African Methodist Episcopal Church and the first African-American religious congregation established on the Pacific Coast of the United States.

In the beginning, a small group of worshipers gathered in Sacramento at the home of Daniel Blue. Under the leadership of Barney Fletcher, this group would form the church that would later be known as St. Andrew's A.M.E. Church. In the fall of 1850, Reverend Isaac Owen, pastor of the Seventh Street Methodist Episcopal Church, participated in the formal organizing of the church.

The first trustees, James R. Brown, John Barton, George Fletcher, John L. Wilson, and Chesterfield Jackson purchased part of the lot in the square between G and H Streets. At this site, the first church was erected and named the Methodist Church of Colored People of Sacramento. In 1851, the members of the church petitioned the Indiana Conference for admission to the African Methodist Episcopal Church and officially became the Bethel African Methodist Church. Later in the 19th century, the church acquired its current name, St. Andrew's African Methodist Episcopal Church.

From *Blacks in the California Gold Rush*



reveal the black group's request for a black elder. Yet, by July 1851, this small congregation had collected $1,500 for religious purposes and they owned a debt-free church. A founding member recalled that the Reverend Isaac Owen, the Sacramento white Methodist minister, was very devoted to this black congregation and helped carry the lumber for the construction of their church on Seventh Street between G and H streets.[3]

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In 1861 Reverend T.M.D. Ward appointed the Rev. Peter Killingsworth to make monthly rounds to eight locations in El Dorado County, including Coloma. Jacob Miller from Stockton also makes periodic visits. The Reverend's travels were documented in the 2015 dissertation of Eunsun Celeste Han's, "All Roads Lead to San Francisco" and found in various *Pacific Appeal* newspaper articles.[7]

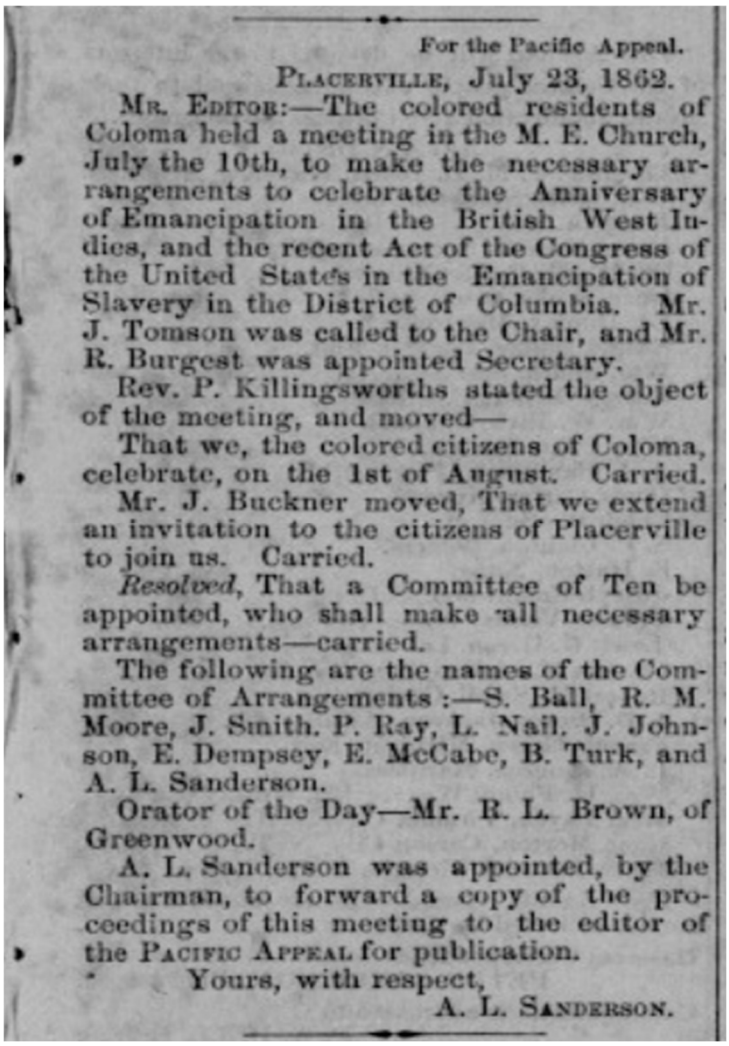
Placerville was established as the seat for the El Dorado AME Circuit until its demise as it maintained the circuits' parsonage.

Although Reverend Killingsworth records himself as an African Methodist Episcopal Clergy, he is not mentioned in the official records of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) as being an AME Elder. It is not clear why he is not listed in the Churches history as a Minister or how he originally was assigned to the El Dorado County circuit and subsequently reassigned to Petaluma prior to his death. Nevertheless, he did devote his life in California to his assigned AME circuits.

Peter Killingsworth purchased both his and his wife's freedom for $3000.00 while living in Atlanta, Georgia. They then immediately migrated to California. Unfortunately, his wife died soon after arriving in California. During the 1865 Colored Convention in Sacramento, he told his story of enslavement and that he took solace in the knowledge that while his wife was no longer alive, her bones lie in the free soil of "El Dorado."[8] (Peter Killingsworth is recorded in the 1852 California Census as living alone in El Dorado County with the occupation of a miner).

There also are period reports in the *Pacific Appeal* of visits to the El Dorado Circuit by Reverend Jacob Miller of the Stockton Circuit early in 1861.

In the July 23, 1862, edition of *Pacific Appeal* newspaper A.L. Sanderson, a house painter from Placerville and lay member of the AME Placerville church reported that the Colored residents of Coloma, El Dorado County met in the Placerville (white) Methodist Episcopal church to plan a Celebration of British West Indies Emancipation.



For the Pacific Appeal.

PLACERVILLE, July 23, 1862.

MR. EDITOR:—The colored residents of Coloma held a meeting in the M. E. Church, July the 10th, to make the necessary arrangements to celebrate the Anniversary of Emancipation in the British West Indies, and the recent Act of the Congress of the United States in the Emancipation of Slavery in the District of Columbia. Mr. J. Tomson was called to the Chair, and Mr. R. Burgest was appointed Secretary.

Rev. P. Killingsworths stated the object of the meeting, and moved—

That we, the colored citizens of Coloma, celebrate, on the 1st of August. Carried.

Mr. J. Buckner moved, That we extend an invitation to the citizens of Placerville to join us. Carried.

Resolved, That a Committee of Ten be appointed, who shall make all necessary arrangements—carried.

The following are the names of the Committee of Arrangements :—S. Ball, R. M. Moore, J. Smith. P. Ray, L. Nail. J. Johnson, E. Dempsey, E. McCabe, B. Turk, and A. L. Sanderson.

Orator of the Day—Mr. R. L. Brown, of Greenwood.

A. L. Sanderson was appointed, by the Chairman, to forward a copy of the proceedings of this meeting to the editor of the PACIFIC APPEAL for publication.

Yours, with respect,

A. L. SANDERSON.

Notably, in attendance was the Coloma blacksmith Stephen Ball whose business at the time was next to Bekeart's gun shop, Rufus Burgess, and Jacob Johnson. Rufus would later replace Stephen Ball as the local agent for the *Pacific Appeal* and *The Elevator*, both period Black newspapers from San Francisco.

The first agent for the *Pacific Appeal* in Coloma was Isaac Morton who was soon replaced by the black abolitionist and barber, Joseph Smallwood. Smallwood also had replaced Lewis Dukehart who had been the Coloma agent for the *Mirror of the Times* the first Black or African American newspaper in San Francisco prior to his leaving for Georgetown, California.[9]

Jacob Johnson would in the next year donate his home and land for the Coloma AME church.

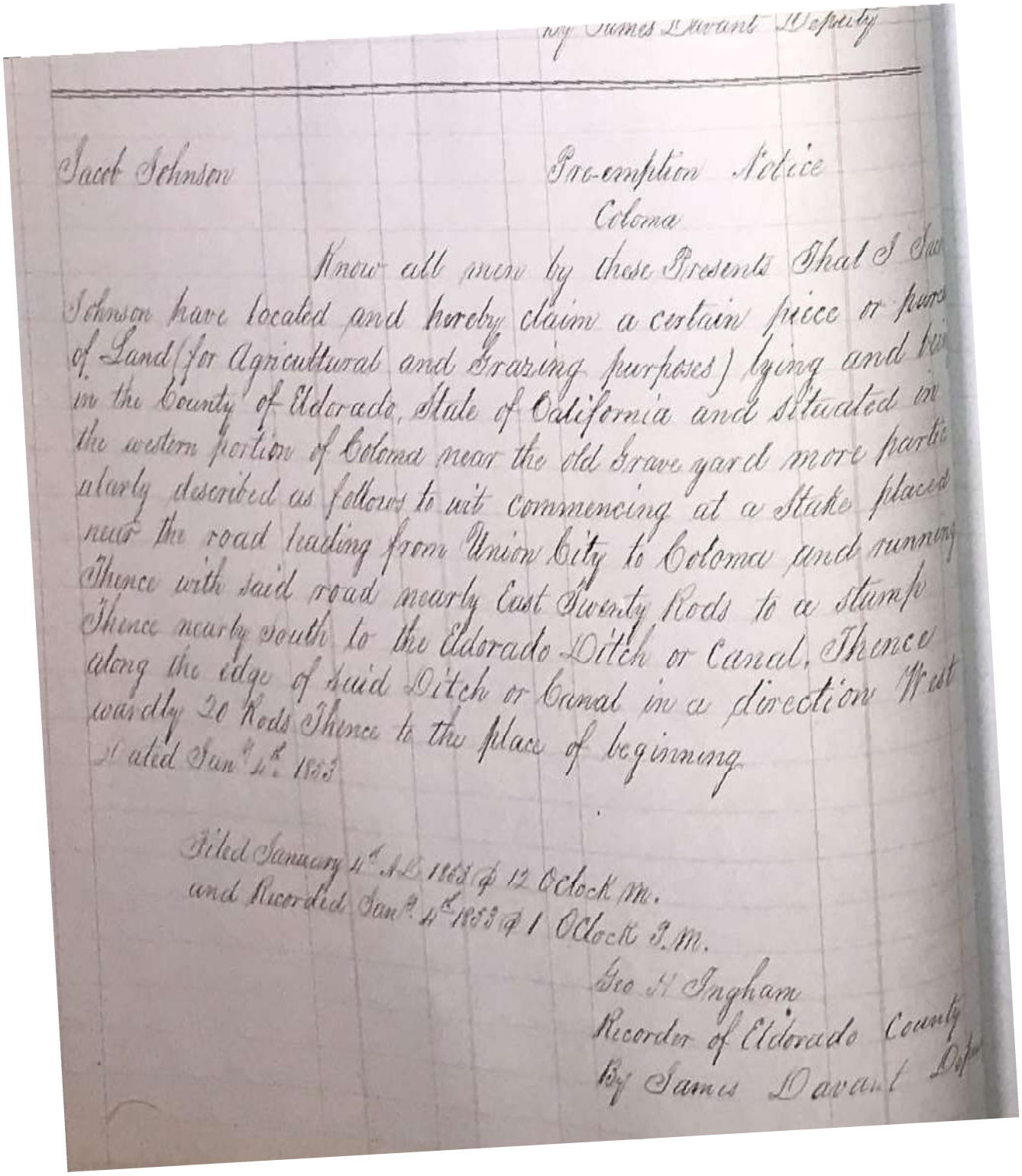
Donation of Property for the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

According to the 1860 Federal Census Jacob Johnson a Black man from Missouri living with three other Black people, Ann and Peter Gavish and Patrick Holland on property that he owned in Coloma.

Two years later Jacob Johnson would donate this property to the AME Church for the purpose of building a church. This property description will match Jacob Johnson's 1853 Pre-Emption of land that was 1.5 to 2 acres.

Jacob Johnson's Preemption of land was described as in the area between Uniontown Road and Lower Main Street (now called State Hwy. 49) and the El Dorado Ditch.

The following 1853 Preemption of property is in the same location as the future African Methodist Episcopal Church.



by James Davant Deputy

Jacob Johnson

Pre-emption Notice

Coloma

Know all men by these Presents That I Jacob Johnson have located and hereby claim a certain piece or parcel of Land (for Agricultural and Grazing purposes) lying and being in the County of Eldorado, State of California and situated in the western portion of Coloma near the old Grave yard more particularly described as follows to wit Commencing at a Stake placed near the road leading from Union City to Coloma and running Thence with said road nearly East Twenty Rods to a Stump Thence nearly South to the Eldorado Ditch or Canal. Thence along the edge of said Ditch or Canal in a direction Westwardly 20 Rods Thence to the place of beginning.

Dated Jan^{y} 1st 1853

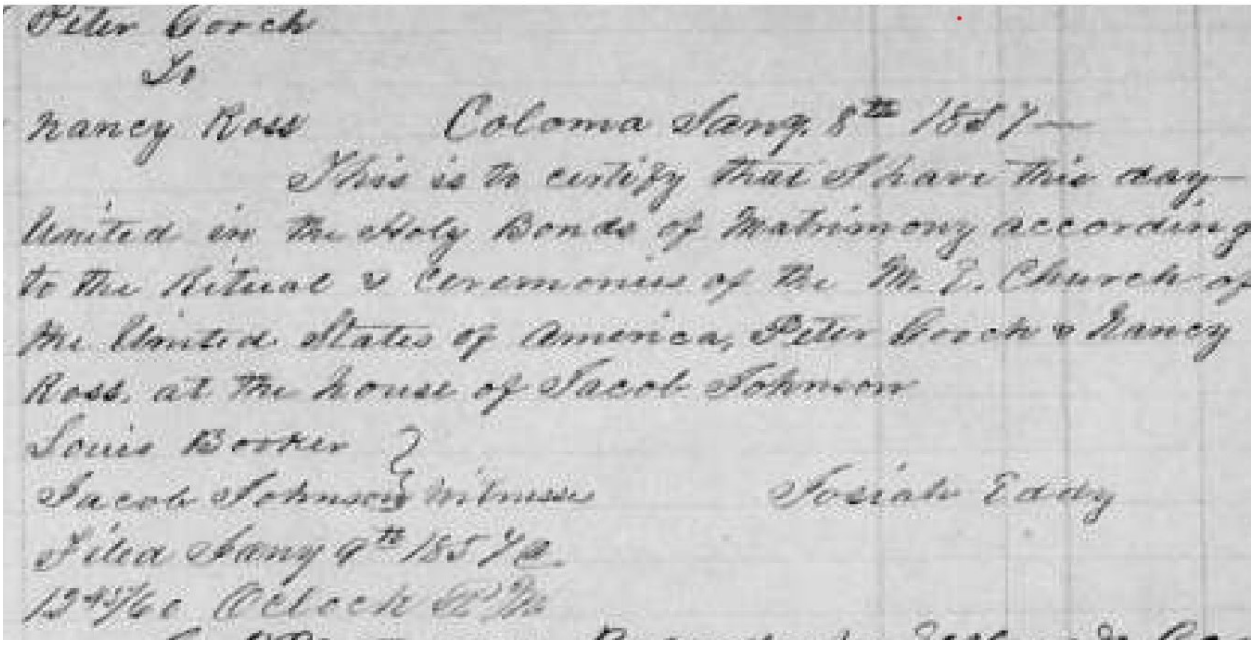
Filed January 1st A.D. 1853 @ 12 Oclock M.
and Recorded Jan^{y} 4th 1853 @ 1 Oclock P.M.

Geo H Ingham
Recorder of Eldorado County
By James Davant Dep

El Dorado County Recorder's Office, Book C, page 28 of Preemptions

On June 27, 1863, a Grant Deed from Jacob Johnson to the African M. E. Church Trustees was recorded with the El Dorado County Recorder.

The detailed description of the preemption of land provides enough detail to see that they are in the same location as that of the Jacob Johnson's donation of land to the African Methodist Church, excepting that the lot has been divided, with one for the Church to be 150' X 50' the adjacent plot being approximately one acre in size.
Even though Jacob Johnson was listed in the 1860 census as living on the property that he donated, there is no specific mention of a building standing on either lot that was donated. However, the marriage license of Nancy Ross to Peter Gooch shows them being married in Jacob Johnson's home giving proof of at least a home on the property that was donated to the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

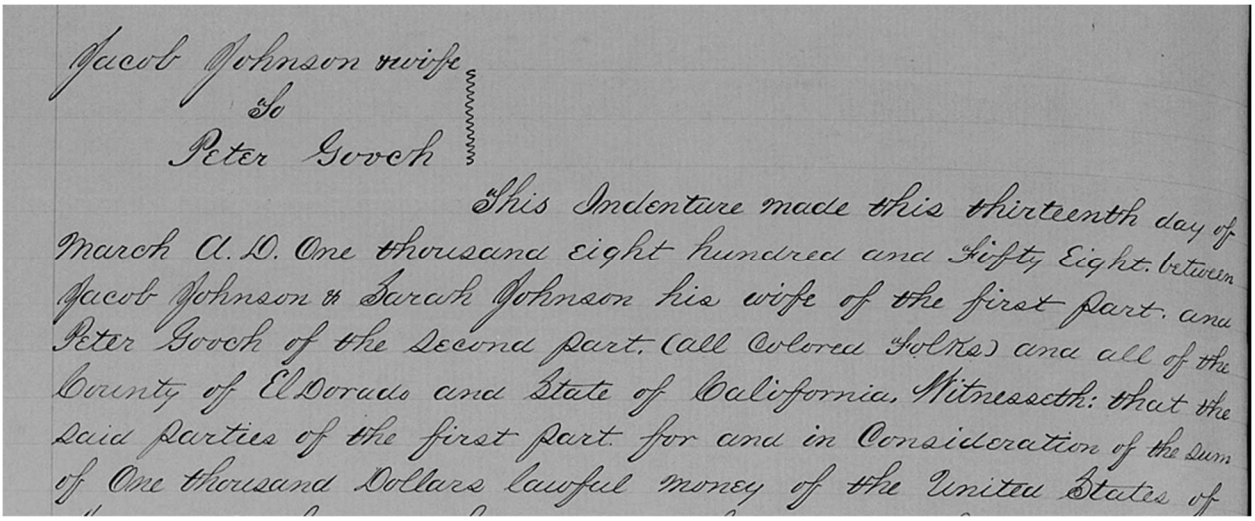

Peter Gooch
To
Nancy Ross Coloma Sang 8th 1857—
This is to certify that I have this day
united in the Holy Bonds of Matrimony according
to the Ritual & Ceremonies of the M. E. Church of
the United States of America, Peter Gooch & Nancy
Ross, at the house of Jacob Johnson
Louis Porter
Jacob Johnson } Witness Josiah Eddy
Filed Sang 9th 1857
12 o'clock M

El Dorado County Recorder's office, 1857 Marriage Index

3335	3335	Charles Williams	45	m	Mu	Gardener	500		Ky
		Mary "	33	f	Mu				Md
		Eslah Baker	3	f	Mu				Cal
3336	3336	Peter Gooch	46	m	Mu	Gardener	1500	1000	Ga
		Ann "	38	f	Mu				Mo
		Ephriah Hollomon	72	m	B	Laborer			Va
		Jacob Johnson	35	m	B	do		100	Mo

During the 1860 Federal Census, El Dorado County, Coloma Township lists Jacob Johnson living next to Charles and Mary Williams who would eventually sell their property to John Wilson, a prominent Black pioneer farmer. At the time of this census Jacob Johnson's property was a few houses down Lower Main Street from Nelson Bell.

This donation of his Preempted land was also the last property that Jacob Johnson owned in Coloma as he had previous sold his other parcels to the Gooch family in March of 1858.[10]


Jacob Johnson wife
to
Peter Gooch

This Indenture made this thirteenth day of March A. D. One thousand eight hundred and Fifty Eight. between Jacob Johnson & Sarah Johnson his wife of the first part. and Peter Gooch of the Second part. (all Colored Folks) and all of the County of El Dorado and State of California. Witnesseth: that the said parties of the first part. for and in Consideration of the Sum of One thousand Dollars lawful money of the United States of

1863 Deed of Jacob Johnson to the African Methodist Episcopal Church (transcribed).

Jacob Johnson

to

Trustees of the African Methodist Church

This indenture made this twenty seventh(27) day of June in the year of our lord one thousand eight-eight hundred and sixty three (1863) between Jacob Johnson of the Town of Coloma in the State of California of the one party and Cooper Smith, A Hamilton and J Johnson trustees in trust for the use and purpose hear and after mentioned of the Township of Coloma, State of California aforesaid of the other part, witnessed that the said Jacob Johnson for and in consideration of the sum of one dollar ……. To him in hand paid at and upon …. …. And delivery of these presents is hereby acknowledged hath given granted bargained, sold released confirmed and conveyed by these doth give grant bargain sell release shall confirm and convey onto them the said trustees and their successor trustees in trust for

use and purpose hereinafter mentioned and declared all the rights …. ……. property claims and demands whatsoever either in law or equity which the said Jacob Johnson hath into or upon all or singular a certain lot or piece of land situate lying and being in the Town of Coloma, State of California amended as follows beginning at a point on the El Dorado ditch on the southside of the place owned by J. Johnson. thence running in an easterly direction on said ditch one hundred and fifty (150') feet, thence in a northerly direction to the Coloma and Uniontown Road, thence in fifty (50) feet along said road, thence in a southernly direction to the place of the beginning corner. Leaving one acre of land more or less together with all and singular, the houses, woods, water ways, privilege, and appurtenances there to belonging or in use pertaining to have and to hold all and singular the above-described lot.

or piece of land situate lying and being as aforementioned together with all and singular the house, woods, waterways, and privileges there in belonging in or anywise appertaining to the said trustees and their successors in office forever in trust that they shall erect or cause to be built thereon a house of place of worship for the use of the members of the African Methodist-Episcopal Church in the United States of America according to the rules and discipline of said church which from time to time be adopted and agreed upon by the Ministers and preachers belonging to said church in their General Conferences in the United States and in further trust and confidence that they shall at all times forever hereafter permit such ministers and preachers belonging to said church as from time to time be duly authorized by the general conference of the ministers and preachers of the said African Methodist Episcopal church of by its annual conference authorized by the said general conference to preach and expound Gods Holy word therein and in further trust and confidence that as often as any one or more of trustees hereinbefore mentioned shall die or cease to be a member or members of said church according to the rules and discipline ….. said them in such case it shall be the duty of the National ministers or preachers (authorized as aforesaid) who shall have the pastoral charge of the members of the said church to call a new meeting of the remaining trustees

as soon as conveniently maybe and when met the said minister or preacher shall proceed to nominate one of more person to fill the place or places of them whose office or offices has or have been vacated as aforementioned provided the person or persons so nominated shall have become a year member or members of a said church immediately preceding such nomination and be at least twenty-one (21) years of age and the said trustees so assembled shall proceed to elect and by a majority of votes appoint the person or persons appoint the person or persons so nominated to fill each vacancy or vacancies in order to keep up the members of trustees forever, and in case of an equal number of votes for and against the said nomination the stationed minister or preacher shall have the casting vote. Provided nevertheless that the said trustee or any of them or their successors have advanced or shall advance any sum or sums of money or are or shall be responsible for any sum or sums of money on account of said premises and they, the said trustees or their successors be obligated to pay the sums of money they or a majority of them shall be duly authorized to raise the said sum of money or sums of money for mortgage on the said premises or by selling the said premises after notice given to the Pastor or preacher that has oversight of the congregation attending divine service on said premises. If the money due be not-paid to the said trustees or their successors within one year after such notice given and if such sale take place the said trustees or their successors after paying the debt and other expenses which are due from money arising from such sale shall deposit the remainder of the money produced.

By the said sale in the hands of the Steward or Stewarts of the Society of the divine belonging to or attending divine service on said premises which surplus of such sale so deposited in the hands of the Stewart or Stewarts shall be at the disposal of next annual conference authorized as aforesaid which Annual conference shall dispose of the said money according to the best of their judgement for the use of said society. And the said Jacob Johnson doth by these …. Warrant and forever defend all and singular those above mentioned and described lot or piece of ground with the appurtenances thereunto belonging unto them the said trustees and their

successors chosen and appointed as aforesaid from the claims or claims of all persons whatever in testimony whereof the said Jacob Johnson his heirs and assigned from the claims or claims of all persons whatever. In testimony whereof the said Jacob Johnson has hereto his hand and seal to the day and year previously mentioned.

Jacob Johnson

His Mark X Sealed and delivered in the presence of us. Wm N. Smith Jacob Mitchell.[11]

The witnesses to the signing were William N. Smith who was the white Methodist Episcopal Church pastor for the Coloma circuit and Jacob Mitchell who was the supervising Elder for the African Methodist Church under T.M.D. Ward.[12]

Jacob and Sara Johnson left the county sometime before 1864.

Recorded during the Third Annual Convention of the African Methodist Episcopal Church held in San Francisco on the last week of October 1863. Bro. P Killingsworth reported his circuit including Placerville, Coloma, Diamond Springs, Mud Springs, Gold Hill, Georgetown, and Greenwood Valley hear the Gospel gladly. He reported that in Coloma a church had been organized and added to the AME body and the congregation has a neat and comfortable house of worship in Coloma free of debt. Also, during that meeting Minister John Jenifer was assigned to the Placerville Circuit of eight locations. The combined worth of the Placerville and Coloma churches was reported to be $1,600.00. In comparison Emmanuel Church was valued at $7,000.00 at the time of construction.[13]

All our churches are paid for.

On the 25th of March, 1862, we purchased a church in San Francisco, at a cost of $6000. Sixty days after the purchase, I was stricken down with the small pox. For weeks, I stood upon the point which divides time from eternity, and, had it not been for the interposition of *infinite* mercy and the effectual prayers of a Christian people, should have been buried amid the deep silence of the dead long ago.

I was disabled from travelling one entire year. However, we paid the $6000 on the property two weeks before I sailed for New York.

The distance between here and San Francisco, (by steamer) is 5800 miles.

On the 3d of September, 1863, we held a convention;—matters were adjusted; grievances redressed; and healing remedies applied where needed.

STATISTICS.

We have churches at the following places:

Church at	San Francisco	worth	$14,000
"	Sacramento	"	3,000
"	Stockton	"	3,500
"	Marysville	"	1,500
"	Grass Valley and Nevada	"	2,100
"	Virginia City, N. T	"	1,300
"	Oakland	"	1,400
"	Petulama	"	1,200
"	Placerville and Coloma	"	1,600

There are school-houses for the education of colored youth at the following points: San Francisco, Sacramento, Petaluma, Stockton, Marysville, San Jose.

The real estate owned by the colored population of the Pacific States and Territories, is estimated at two million dollars.

That region of country is celebrated for its rich agricultural districts, extensive vineyards, and exhaustless mines of gold, silver and copper.

Nearly one hundred millions of dollars have been exported within 14 years, and millions still remain.

For salubrity of climate, richness of soil, vastness of mineral wealth and kind-hearted people, it is not excelled by any land beneath the circuit of the sun.

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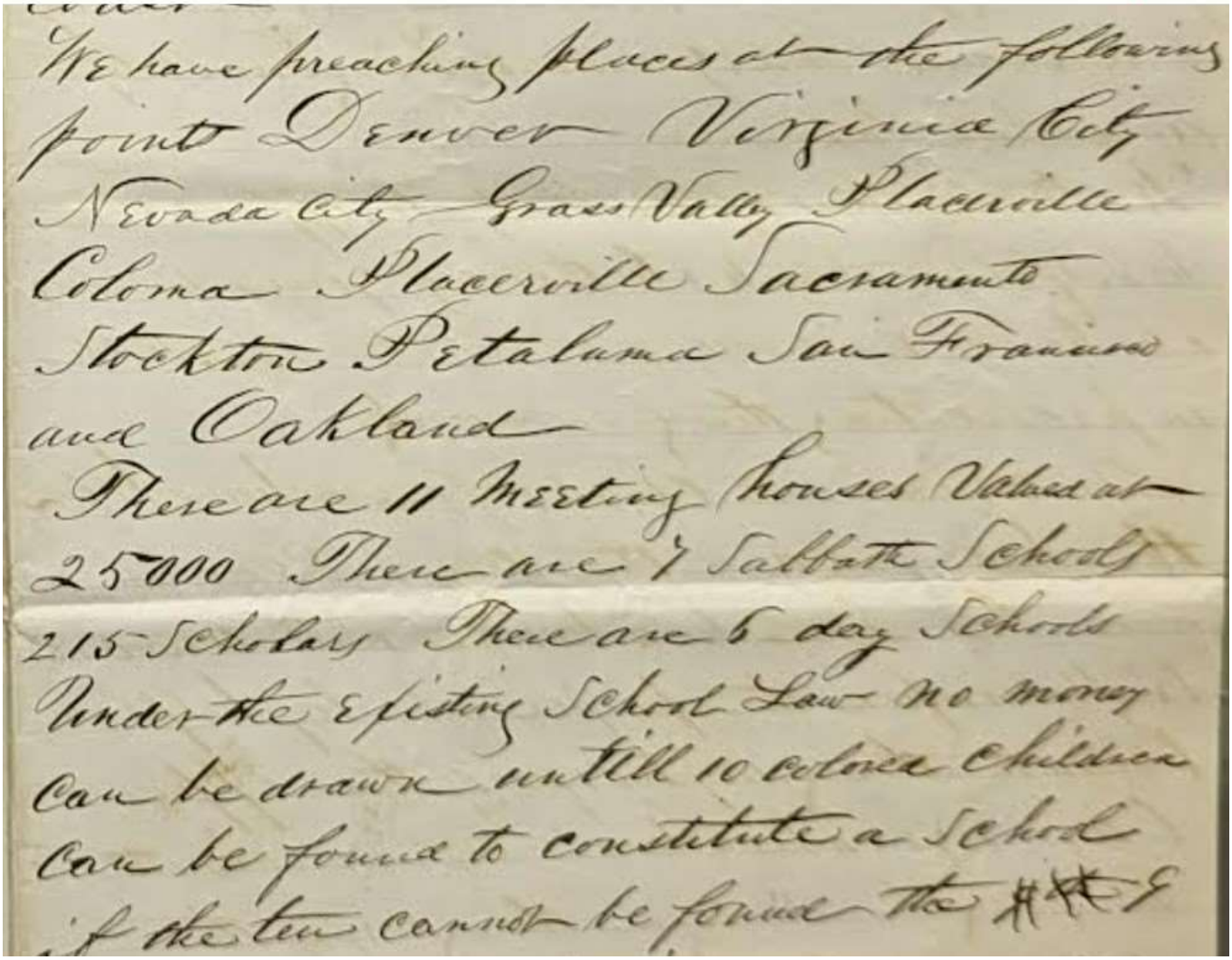
Value of AME Churches in California in 1863

1863 September, African Methodist Episcopal church Elder T.M.D. Ward's report to Issac Owen at the White Methodist Episcopal Church conference as to the status of the AME Church Circuit on the West Coast:


We have preaching places at the following
points Denver Virginia City
Nevada city Grass Valley Placerville
Coloma Placerville Sacramento
Stockton Petaluma San Francisco
and Oakland
There are 11 Meeting Houses Valued at
25000 There are 7 Sabbath Schools
215 Scholars There are 6 day Schools
Under the existing School Law no money
can be drawn untill 10 colored children
can be found to constitute a School
if the ten cannot be found the ***

Courtesy of Stephen Yale, Methodist Archives, Berkeley, CA[15]

Sometime between his arrival in California in 1863 and his appointment out of state, Elder Jacob Mitchell also visited the Placerville/Coloma District. By 1866, Elder Mitchel was recorded living in New Jersey.

While the Jacob Johnson deed to the Coloma AME church included two lots. These are not the two lots referenced by Bishop Campbell in his early 1865 letter to Brother Weaver. In that letter, Campbell says he "…went to Placerville where I found a Church and pastor. They have a

small house and two lots, upon one of which they will shortly move a large house…" The "two church lots" that Campbell mentions in his letter are clearly in the context of Placerville and not Coloma.

He also mentions that he preached to white brethren during these travels but did not mention the locations.

For the Christian Recorder.

A LETTER FROM REV. BISHOP CAMPBELL.

DEAR BROTHER WEAVER: - When I last wrote to you I was in Sacramento city, the capital of the State of *California*. I am now in Virginia City, called "the Silver City of the new State of Nevada." It is so called because it is situated in the midst of the largest silver mines in this country. This city is located at the foot of Mount Davidson, among the range of mountains which form a part of the Sierra Nevada, at the head of Carson Valley, twelve miles from the city of Carson, the capital of the State of Nevada. Mount Davidson is one of the highest mountains in the world. The top of it is almost perpetually covered with snow. Few seasons pass during which snow may not be found upon its summit. Crossing the Sierra Nevada at this season of the year is most difficult, and very dangerous, and at times impossible. Accidents and dreadful calamities are of common occurrence. Snow slides from the mountains frequently take place, covering many acres of ground, and destroying in their course both man and beast. One of these occurred a few days ago, which came near overtaking and burying alive the regular line stage, and all its passengers. The past winter in this section is said to have been unusually severe, though hard winters are common to the country. We have had snow upon snow, here a great deal and there a great deal, with rain, hail, ice and stormy winds.

The mountains are covered with snow in some places eight feet deep, and in others eleven, and even up to twenty feet, according to the reports of those who profess to have a knowledge of these things. For miles there is not a tree, not even a shrub to be seen upon the sides of the mountains; you can see nothing but the everlasting hills, lifting up their lofty peaks to the skies, covered with snow, as far as the eye can reach.

Such is a part of the scenery with which I am surrounded, while I am writing to you. A bird is never seen here at any season of the year, except it be a canary bird in a cage, or once in a great while, a poor little snow bird, alone upon the mountains.

I spent twelve days in Sacramento City, preached for them three times, lectured once, held a quarterly Conference with Elder Ward, or assisted him, held a love feast and a general class meeting, and had, altogether, good visit at that place, as, indeed, I have had at all the points which I have visited. They have had no pastor here since Elder Mitchell left them, in April, 1864. They are very anxious for one, and I hope the Annual Conference will be able to supply them.

Friday, the 3d inst., I left them and went to Placerville, where I found a church and pastor.

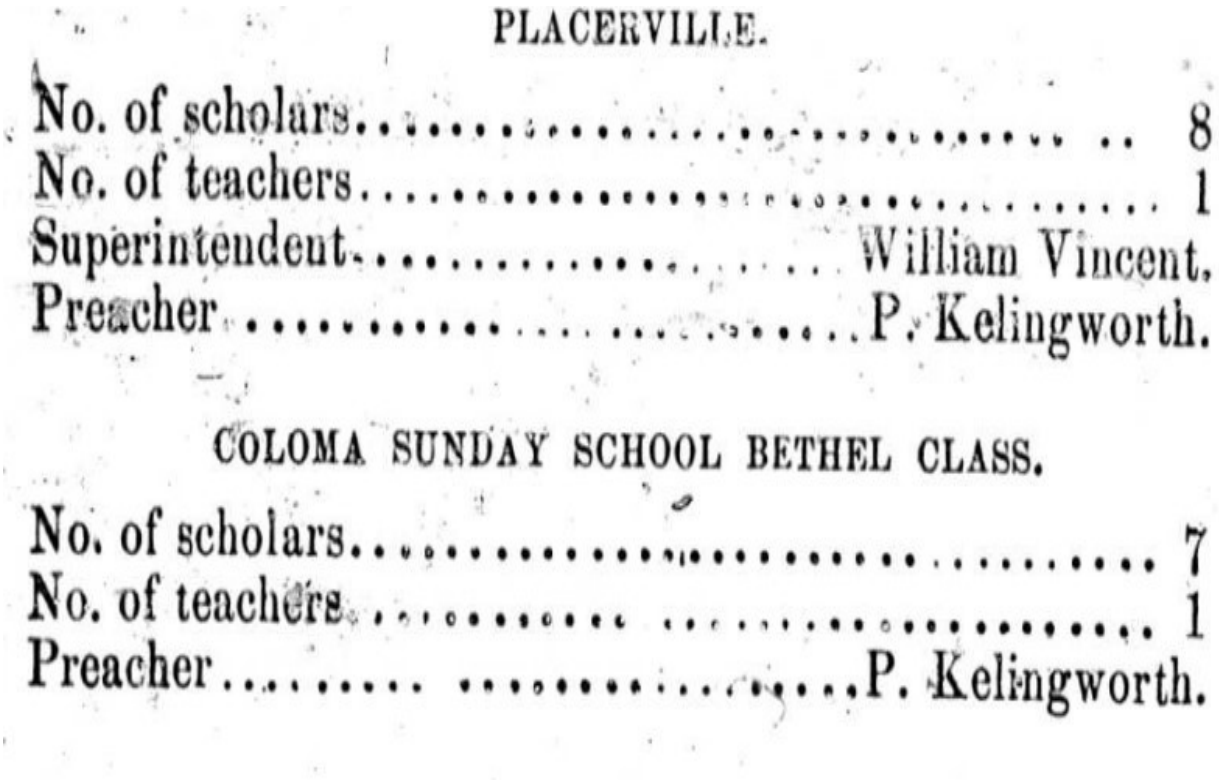
They have a small house and two church lots, upon one of which they will shortly move; a large house, bought from the Presbyterians by a member of that church, and given by him to the members of the *A.M.E*. Church. This is a very good house.

I preached here three times, and delivered three lectures in one night, upon different subjects; visited *Coloma* during my stay in Placerville, preached a sermon and delivered a lecture on the same night, at two places. Very hard work this, my brother, but I have been compelled to do so, or fail to supply, in a great degree, the wants of the people.

I need not tell you, that in every city which I have visited, I have been kindly invited to fill the pulpits of our white brethren, and that I have filled at least one or more in every city that I have visited, and have now several more pressing invitations to comply with.

16

In 1864 the Coloma African Methodist Episcopal Church under Peter Killingsworth reports that its members total 6, Sunday School members 7 with others attending.



PLACERVILLE.

No. of scholars..... 8
No. of teachers..... 1
Superintendent..... William Vincent.
Preacher..... P. Kelingworth.

COLOMA SUNDAY SCHOOL BETHEL CLASS.

No. of scholars..... 7
No. of teachers..... 1
Preacher..... P. Kelingworth.

A. M. E. Bethel Church,		San Francisco	92
"	"	Sacramento	32
"	"	Stockton	29
"	"	Marysville	16
"	"	Virginia City, N. T.	22
"	"	Nevada	12
"	"	Grass Valley	14
"	"	Placerville	6
"	"	Coloma	6
"	"	Mud Spring	2
"	"	Diamond Spring	—
"	"	San Jose	3
"	"	Oakland	8
"	"	Victoria	25
			—267

17

DR. J. T. JENIFER.

Jenifer, Rev. John Thomas, the son of Catherine and John H. Jenifer, was born a slave at Upper Marlborough, Prince George County, Maryland, March 10, 1835. He went with his owners to Baltimore in 1853, and there worked as porter for a period of five years in the store of his young master, Truman Dorsey, who was in the dry goods business. For two years he then worked as receiving and shipping clerk in the dry goods house of J. Edward Bird & Bros., for the sum of $16 and board.

He was converted in Sharp Street M. E. Church, April 4, 1856, and in October 1859 he went to New Bedford, Mass., in search of freedom and education. He joined the A. M. E. Church, under Rev. Henry J. Young. He studied at Taylor's Commercial College, in New Bedford, with the aim of going into the dry goods business. But he was licensed by Rev. William W. Grimes, pastor of Kempton Street A. M. E. Church, on February 5, 1862. He set sail for California on July 21, 1862, and was appointed by Missionary Elder T. M. D. Ward to Sacramento City Station, October 8, 1862. In 1863 he was assigned to Placerville Circuit, Eldorado County, having six preaching points, including the town of Coloma, where the first nugget of gold was discovered in Suter's mill race in 1848. At Placerville, he purchased a lot for a parsonage, also a lot upon which he built a church at a cost of $2,500, leaving only an indebtedness of $80 when he left. During this time he taught the city school for colored children. Bishop J. P. Campbell organized the California Conference, April 10, 1865, at San Francisco, Rev. Jeremiah B. Sampson, secretary; J. T. Jenifer, assistant. At that session, on April 13, Rev. J. T. Jenifer was ordained deacon.

From this conference he was transferred to the Ohio

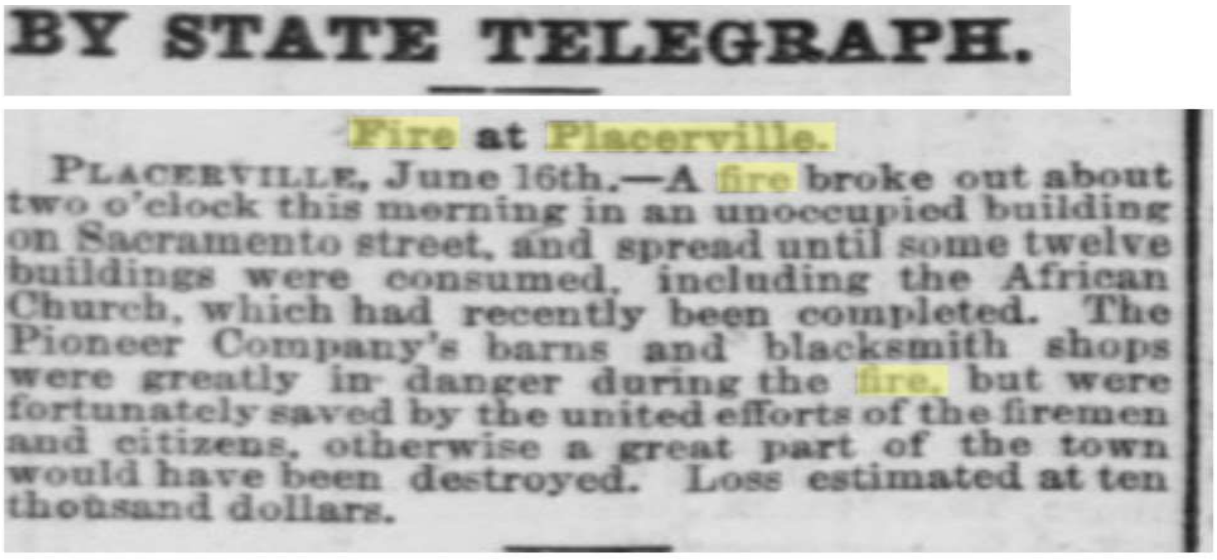
18

Although Rev. Jenifer was recorded as being assigned to the Placerville Circuit his presence was not as documented as well as Rev. Killingsworth.

In February 1865 Bishop J. P. Campbell preached a sermon in Placerville and Coloma.

During the April 1865 California Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church the Reverend John Thomas Jenifer was ordained and was reassigned to the Ohio Circuit.

In April of 1865, the St. Patrick Catholic Church in Placerville was burned at news of the fall of Richmond to Union forces, allegedly by members of the Placerville Know-Nothing Party and the Copperheads whose members were prominent in town. Later in June a fire destroyed a portion of Chinatown and the newly constructed AME church and vestry. Will Upton reports that in *The Churches of El Dorado County* the Black church was never rebuilt.[19]



BY STATE TELEGRAPH.

Fire at Placerville.

PLACERVILLE, June 16th.—A fire broke out about two o'clock this morning in an unoccupied building on Sacramento street, and spread until some twelve buildings were consumed, including the African Church, which had recently been completed. The Pioneer Company's barns and blacksmith shops were greatly in danger during the fire, but were fortunately saved by the united efforts of the firemen and citizens, otherwise a great part of the town would have been destroyed. Loss estimated at ten thousand dollars.

Alta Daily California Morning Edition, 17 June 1865 reports the fire that destroyed the African Methodist Church and rectory.

After the 1865 fire in Placerville, Peter Killingsworth is assigned to the Petaluma AME church where he served until late 1869. 1870 finds him assigned to the Oregon Circuit, later in the year he is back in Sacramento at St. Andrews Church.[20]

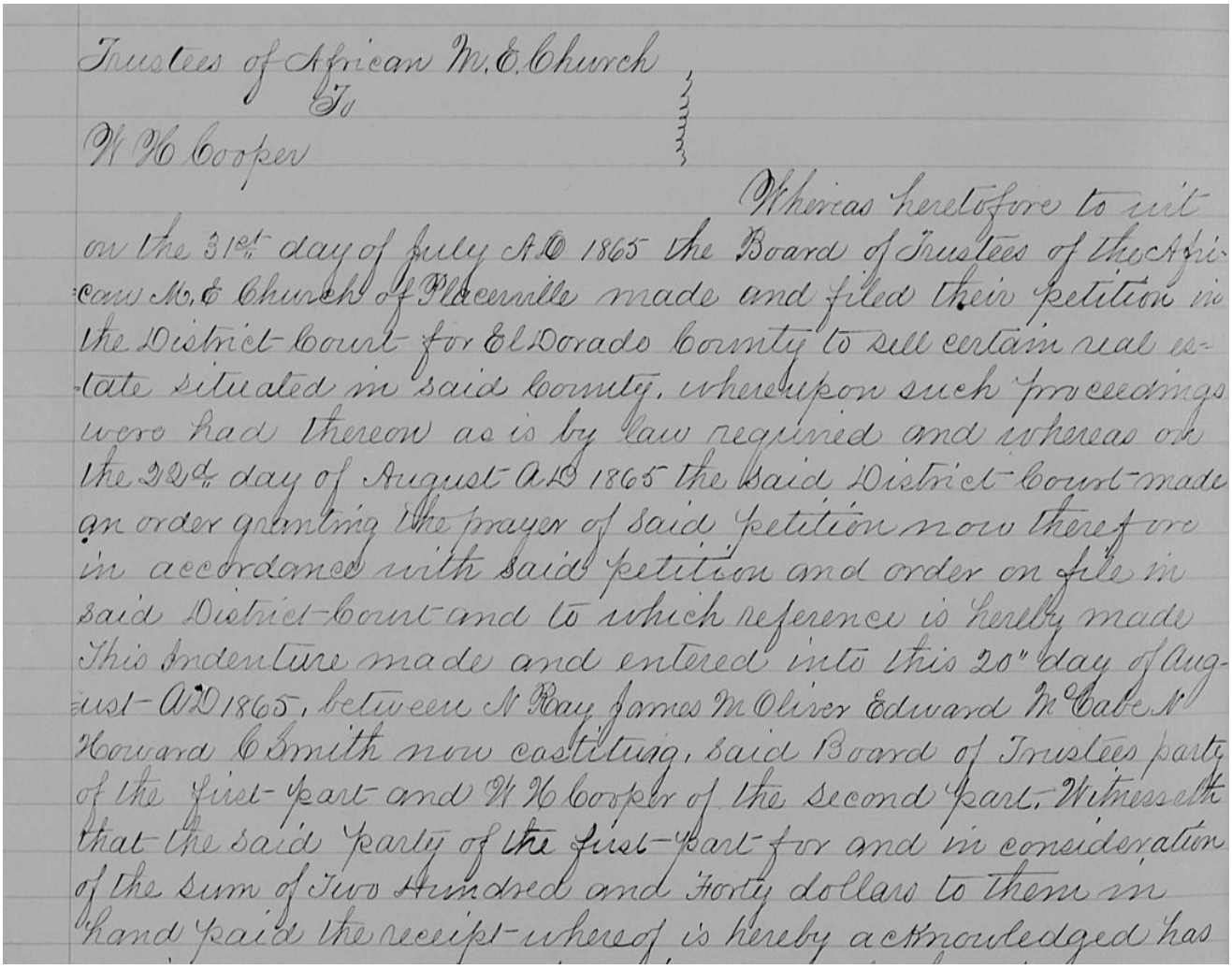
In February 1871 Rev. Killingsworth is again reassigned, this time to the Nevada County Circuit.

On September 27, 1872, Peter Killingsworth dies in Sacramento at age 82 having never returned to the El Dorado Circuit or Coloma.

The late summer of 1865 marks the beginning of the abandonment of the El Dorado Circuit of the AME Church with the loss of the church and parsonage in Placerville and the growth of Stockton and the Marysville/Yuba City circuits.

In August 1865, Trustees of Placerville African Methodist Church petition the Court to sell the fire damaged church property on Chapel Street in Placerville.

The subsequent sale of the Placerville AME church property leaves the El Dorado Circuit without a personage and main preaching location. The circuit was only sporadically supported after the fire destroyed the church and parsonage.



Trustees of African M. E. Church
To
W H Cooper

Whereas heretofore to wit on the 31st day of July A D 1865 the Board of Trustees of the African M. E. Church of Placerville made and filed their petition in the District Court for El Dorado County to sell certain real estate situated in said County, whereupon such proceedings were had thereon as is by law required and whereas on the 22d day of August A D 1865 the said District Court made an order granting the prayer of said petition now therefore in accordance with said petition and order on file in said District Court and to which reference is hereby made This Indenture made and entered into this 20th day of August A D 1865, between N Ray James M Oliver Edward McCabe N Howard C Smith now constituting said Board of Trustees party of the first part and W H Cooper of the second part. Witnesseth that the said party of the first part for and in consideration of the sum of Two Hundred and Forty dollars to them in hand paid the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged has

21

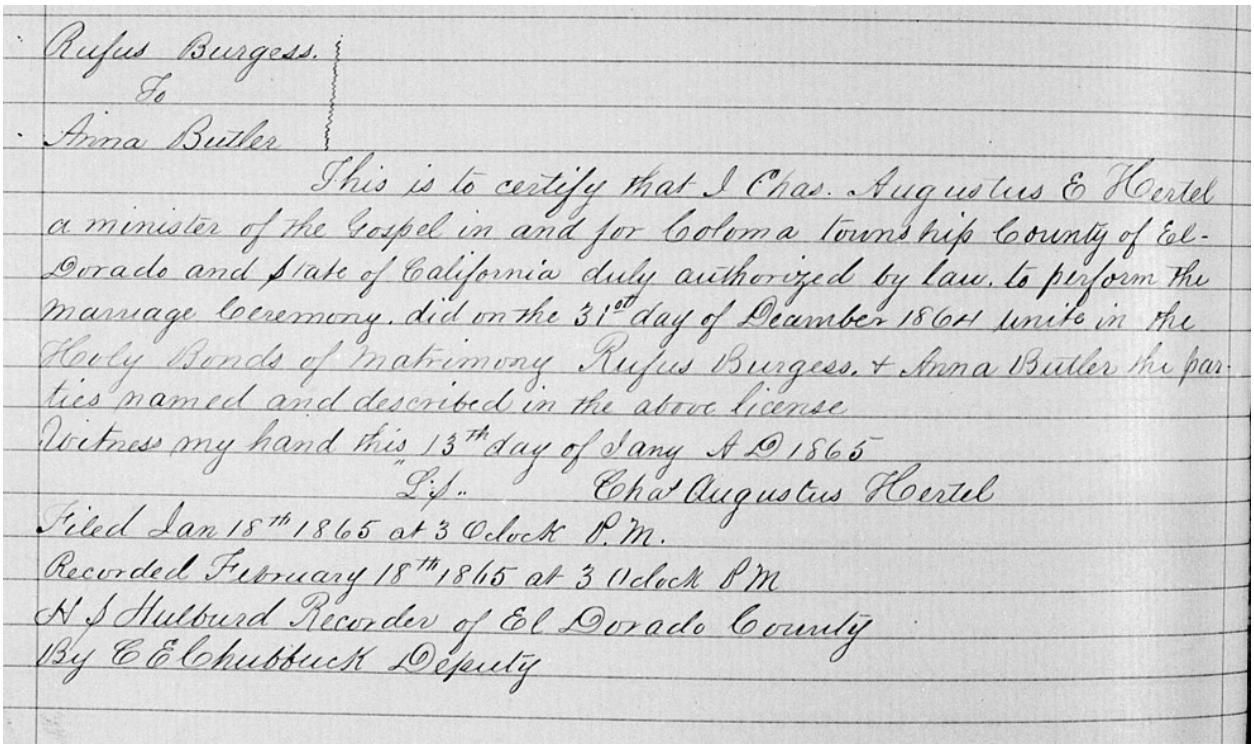
There are reports from earlier researchers that a few AME Church Camp meetings were held in Coloma with more than one hundred attendees. Period newspapers and AME documents only show Camp meetings being held at the AME Church grounds in Stockton and Yuba City.

The white Methodists did hold early camp meetings in Uniontown and the Episcopal Methodist church had camp meetings in Gold Hill. The Black community certainly may have attended, although those attending these meetings were not documented.

In early 1865 Elder William Offer replaces Elder Jenifer for the Placerville and Grass Valley Circuits that at the time included Yuba City and Marysville. No records of the circuit remain to show the frequency of visits to Coloma. By 1868 Elder Offer is listed as living in Marysville.

Marriages, funerals, and baptisms are still being performed by the White Methodist Episcopal Church pastors in the Placerville or Georgetown Circuit which included Coloma.

Example of Black residents Rufus Burgess and Anna Butler's marriage performed by a white minister from the Methodist Episcopal church in Coloma.

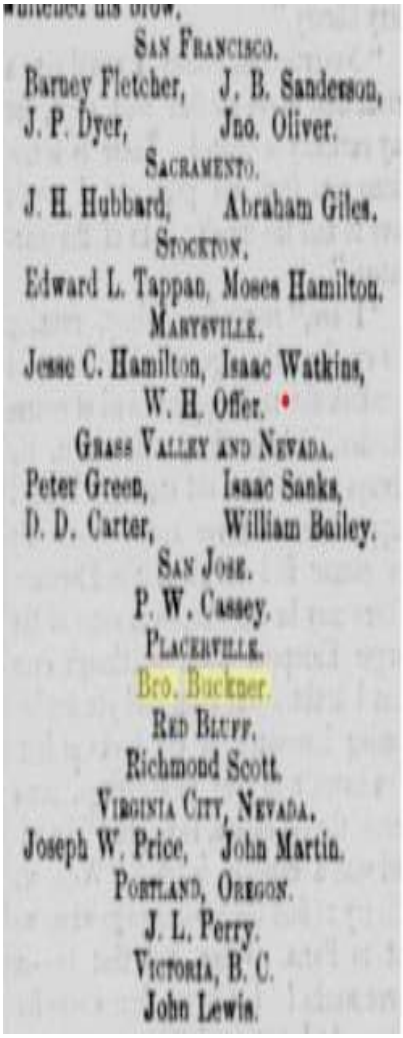


Rufus Burgess.
To
Anna Butler

This is to certify that I Chas. Augustus E Hertel a minister of the Gospel in and for Coloma township County of El-Dorado and State of California duly authorized by law to perform the marriage ceremony. did on the 31st day of Deamber 1864 unite in the Holy Bonds of Matrimony Rufus Burgess. & Anna Butler the parties named and described in the above license
Witness my hand this 13th day of Jany A D 1865
L.S. Chas Augustus Hertel
Filed Jan 18th 1865 at 3 Oclock P.M.
Recorded February 18th 1865 at 3 Oclock P M
H S Hulburd Recorder of El Dorado County
By C E Chubbuck Deputy

El Dorado County Recorder, 1865 Marriage Index

1868-70 BrotherBuckner (a lay person, unable to perform services) is the only person listed for the AME Placerville Circuit that included Coloma. John Buckner was last recorded as living in Mud Springs (modern day El Dorado).



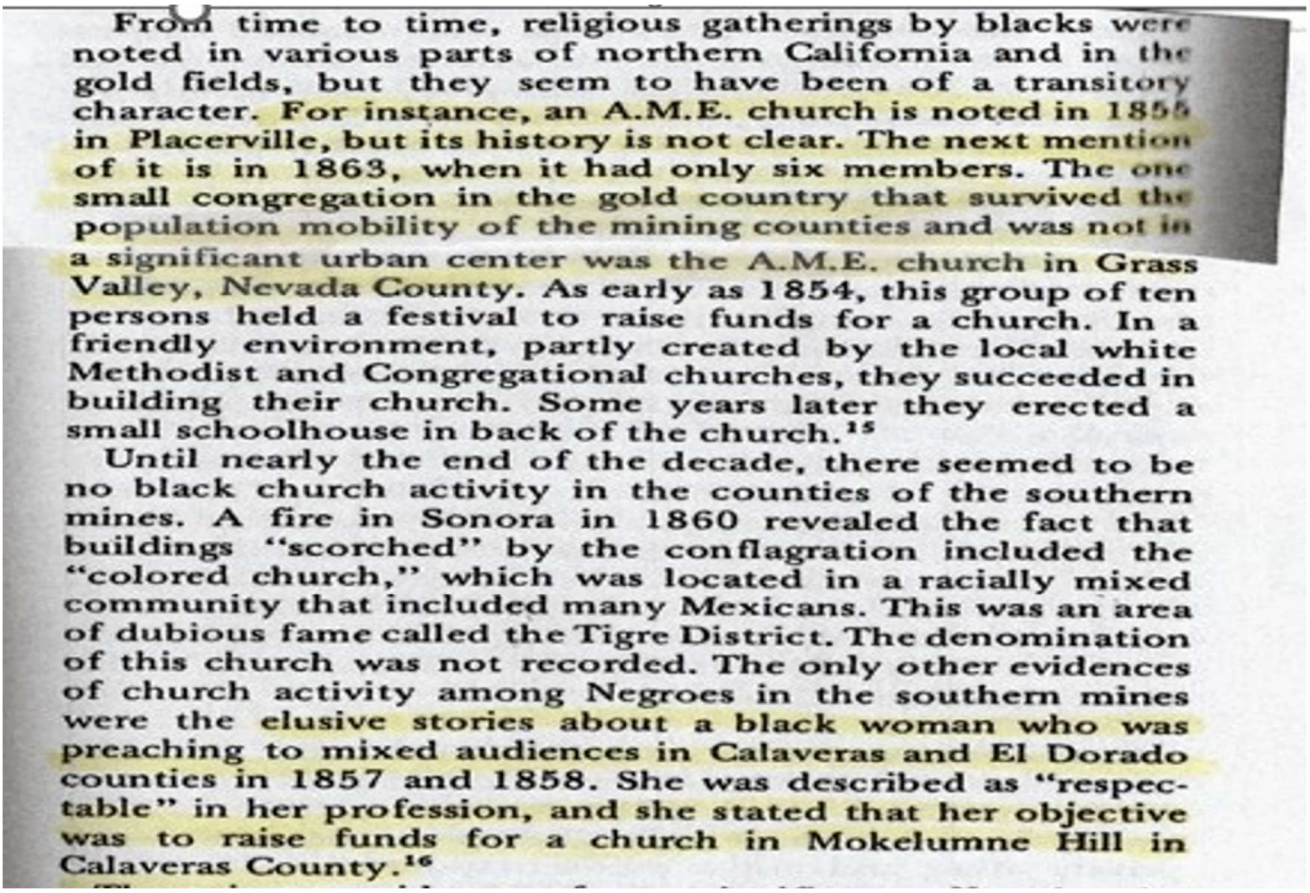
San Francisco.
Barney Fletcher, J. B. Sanderson,
J. P. Dyer, Jno. Oliver.
Sacramento.
J. H. Hubbard, Abraham Giles.
Stockton.
Edward L. Tappan, Moses Hamilton.
Marysville.
Jesse C. Hamilton, Isaac Watkins,
W. H. Offer.
Grass Valley and Nevada.
Peter Green, Isaac Sanks,
D. D. Carter, William Bailey.
San Jose.
P. W. Cassey.
Placerville.
Bro. Buckner.
Red Bluff.
Richmond Scott.
Virginia City, Nevada.
Joseph W. Price, John Martin.
Portland, Oregon.
J. L. Perry.
Victoria, B. C.
John Lewis.

22

After 1868 no African Methodist Episcopal records have been located showing permanently assigned Circuit Ministers for the Placerville / Coloma circuit or for any of the other surrounding communities in El Dorado County.

By 1870 Elder William Offer was living and preaching in San Francisco.

Rudolph M Lapp reports the following in his 1977 book *Blacks in Gold Rush California*. While his research does not specifically address the AME Church in Coloma, it gives a broader view of the AME church in the gold fields.



From time to time, religious gatherings by blacks were noted in various parts of northern California and in the gold fields, but they seem to have been of a transitory character. For instance, an A.M.E. church is noted in 1855 in Placerville, but its history is not clear. The next mention of it is in 1863, when it had only six members. The one small congregation in the gold country that survived the population mobility of the mining counties and was not in a significant urban center was the A.M.E. church in Grass Valley, Nevada County. As early as 1854, this group of ten persons held a festival to raise funds for a church. In a friendly environment, partly created by the local white Methodist and Congregational churches, they succeeded in building their church. Some years later they erected a small schoolhouse in back of the church.[15]

Until nearly the end of the decade, there seemed to be no black church activity in the counties of the southern mines. A fire in Sonora in 1860 revealed the fact that buildings "scorched" by the conflagration included the "colored church," which was located in a racially mixed community that included many Mexicans. This was an area of dubious fame called the Tigre District. The denomination of this church was not recorded. The only other evidences of church activity among Negroes in the southern mines were the elusive stories about a black woman who was preaching to mixed audiences in Calaveras and El Dorado counties in 1857 and 1858. She was described as "respectable" in her profession, and she stated that her objective was to raise funds for a church in Mokelumne Hill in Calaveras County.[16]

23

May 1868, the Reverend TMD Ward is appointed Bishop for the West Coast of the AME Church. His appointment to Bishop allowed marriages and funerals to be administered by AME Elders. Bishop Ward stayed in

California until 1872 when he returned permanently to Alabama and other Southern Districts.

Ward, Thomas M. D., tenth bishop of the A. M. E. Church, was born in Hanover, Pa., September 28, 1823. He was converted in 1838 at Philadelphia and joined the A. M. E. Church; was licensed to preach in 1843 at Harrisburg, Pa., by Rev. Levin Lee, and in 1846 was admitted to the New England conference; was ordained deacon in 1847, and elder in 1849. After being ordained elder he was appointed missionary for

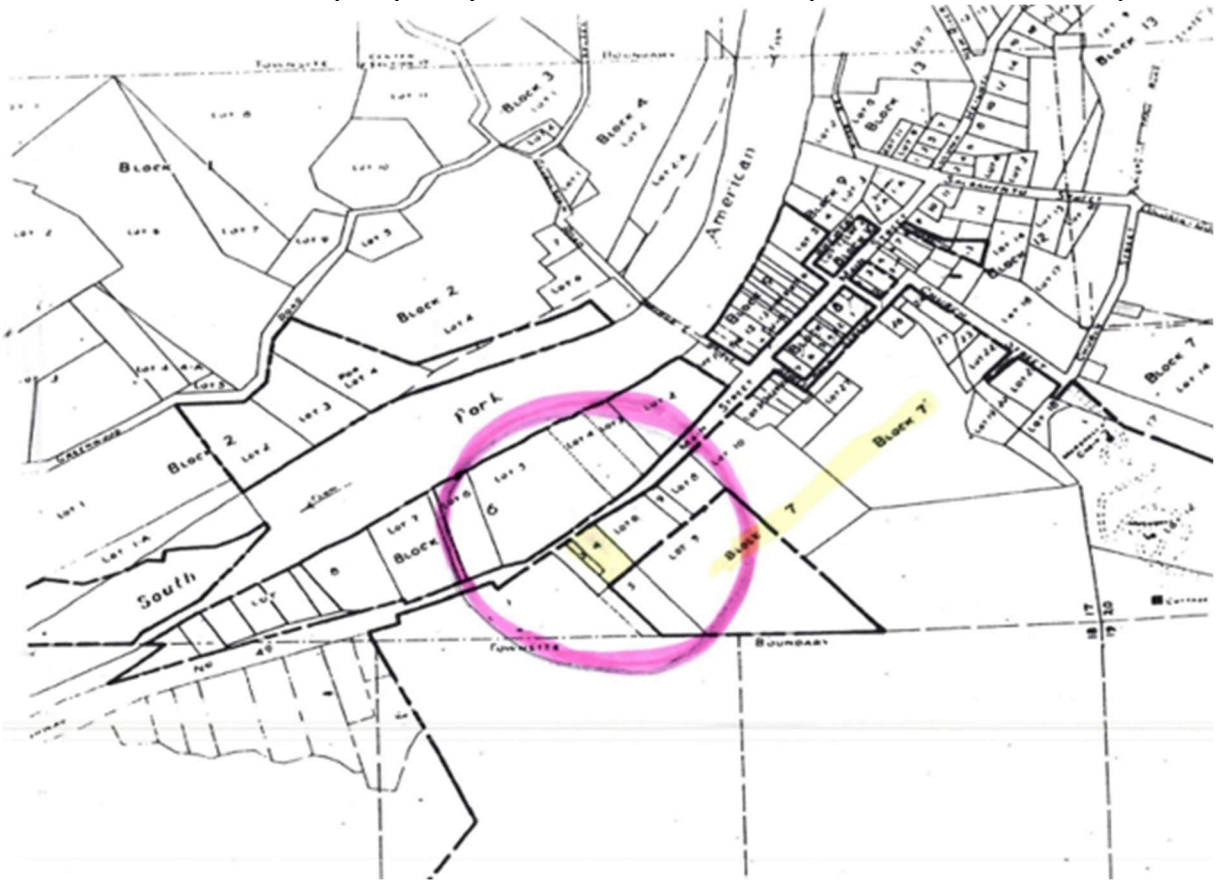
BISHOP T. M. D. WARD.

the Pacific coast, where he remained several years, organizing churches in that section, then but sparsely populated. In 1868 he was elected bishop, ordained Lexington, Va., and the rural schools; was licensed to May 25, 1868, and returned as bishop to the Pacific coast, where he remained four years. He was afterwards assigned to Alabama, Florida and Mississippi and other districts in the South, where he did much to build up the church, and distinguished himself as a pulpit orator of the first class. The degree of D.D. was conferred upon him by Wilberforce University. He died June 10, 1894, and is buried in Washington, D. C.

24

In 1873, with the Town of Coloma now surveyed by the County of El Dorado, the AME Church is occupying Lot 3, Block 7, .11 acres and the adjoining Lot 4, Block 7, .63 acres being occupied by another. This survey matching the 1853 Jacob Johnson Preemption description of land and boundaries that Jacob Johnson deeded to the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1863.

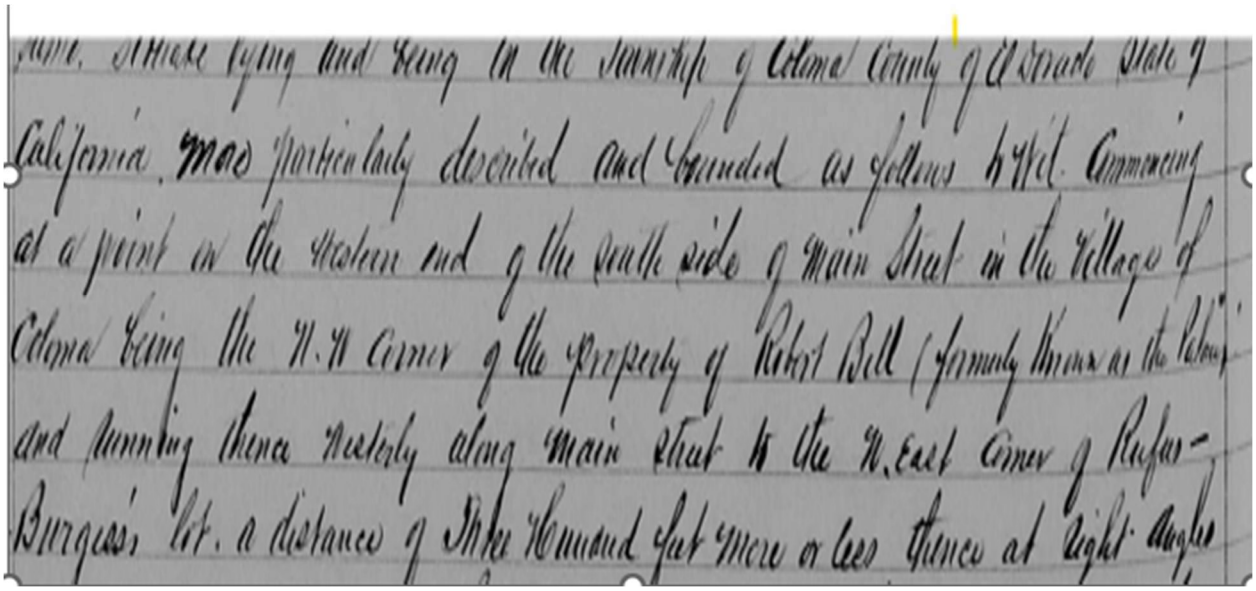
Jacob Johnson's deeded property shown as drawn upon a modern map.



25

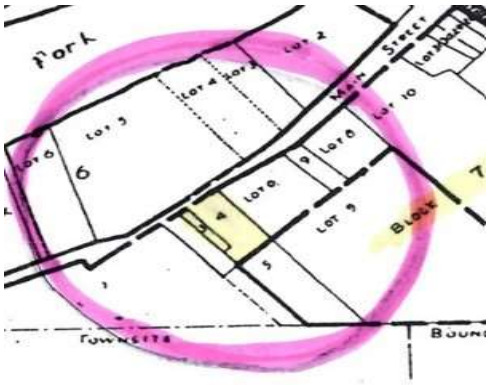
"A lane between the Peter Gooch and Burgess lots – they quarreled over the lane – the land led to the colored church."
Cecelia Papini's notes on Coloma. California State Parks

Sometime between the 1863 Jacob Johnson donation to the AME Church and 1869, Rufus Burgess was shown occupying the lot that was a major part of the AME Church property (Lot 4, Block 7). This location was referenced in November 1869 deed for Lot 6, Block 7 from C.H and Mary Williams to John Wilson.



26

The William lot is Lot 6, just to the right of the AME Church Lots 3&4 of Block 7.

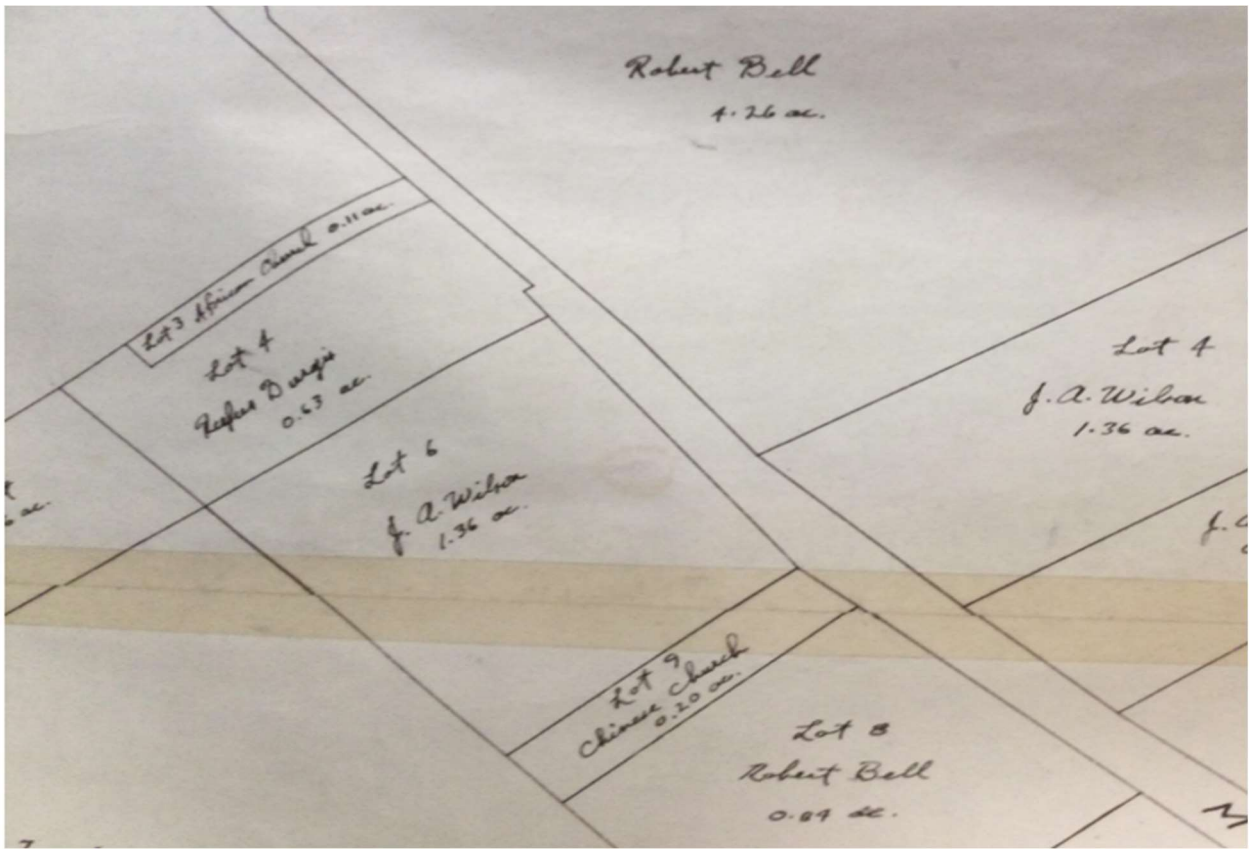


Mention should be made that prior to 1866 the Black children of Coloma were assumed to be attending a monthly or bi-weekly Sunday school at the AME church.

Regular school in Coloma for Black children was never mentioned in any of the AME Church correspondence or located records.

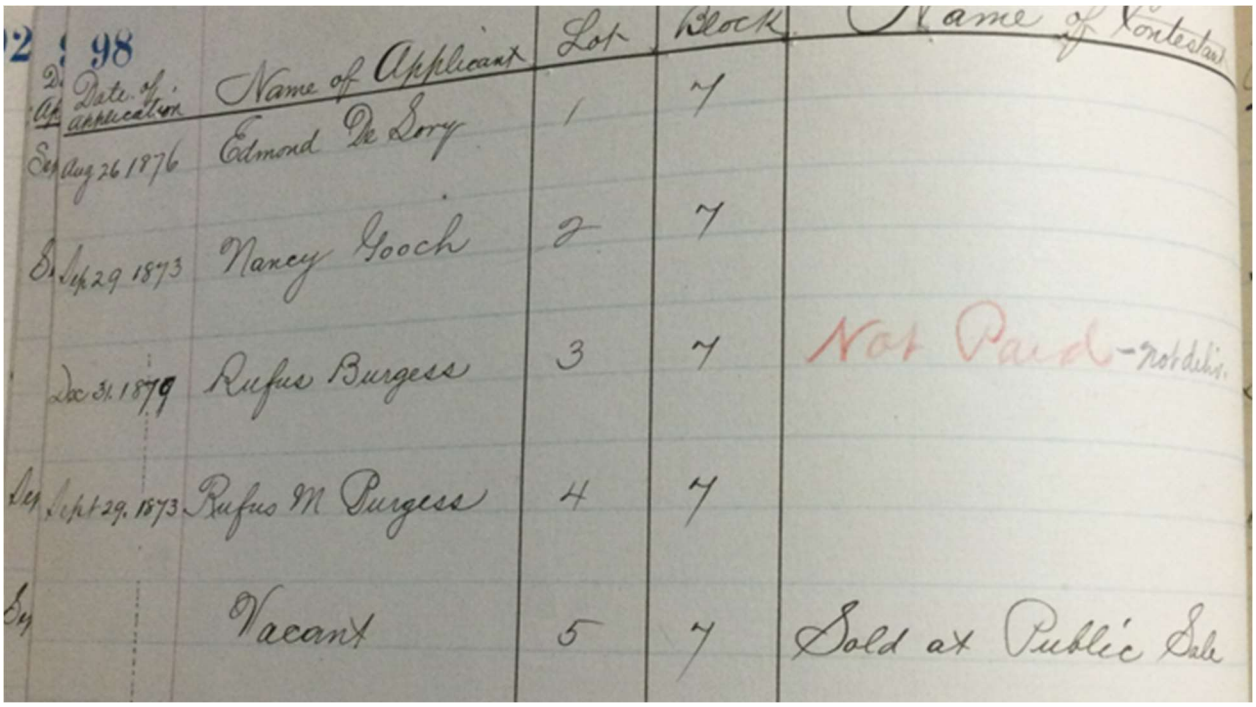
Records found for the Coloma public school attendance are incomplete and inconclusive. However, the 1870 census shows school age Black children at the public school in Coloma and as of 1875 El Dorado County reports that “all Colored children of the County are attending public school”.[27]

The Bishop George A. Miller relates in his book “Growing Up” that the Black population attend his father’s Methodist Episcopal Church in Coloma during his time as pastor from 1873 to 1875 that met in the Emmanuel Church.[28]



El Dorado County Surveyor’s map of 1873, courtesy of Marshal Gold Discovery State Historical Park.

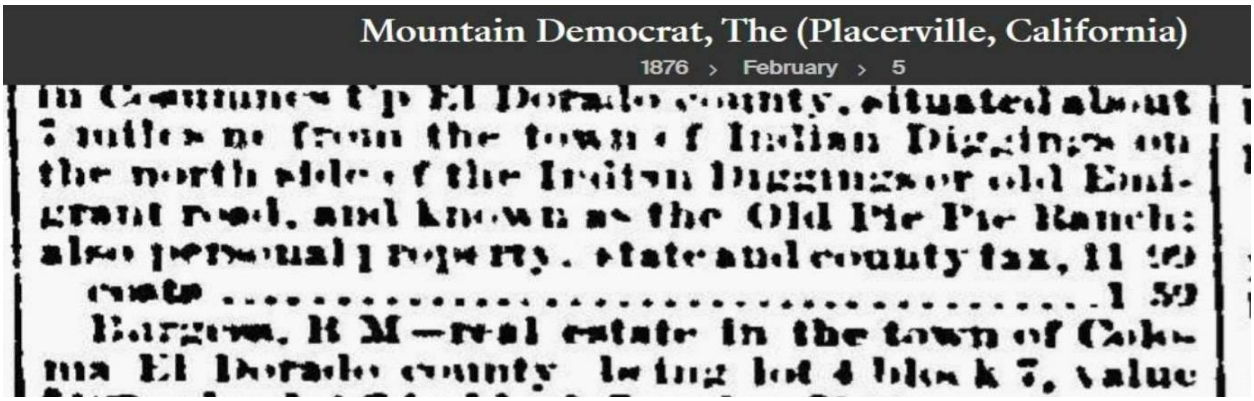
Although Rufus Burgess is shown living on parcel, lot 4, next to the African Methodist Episcopal Church during the May 1873 El Dorado County land survey, Rufus did not receive the title for lot 4, block 7 until 1879. [29]



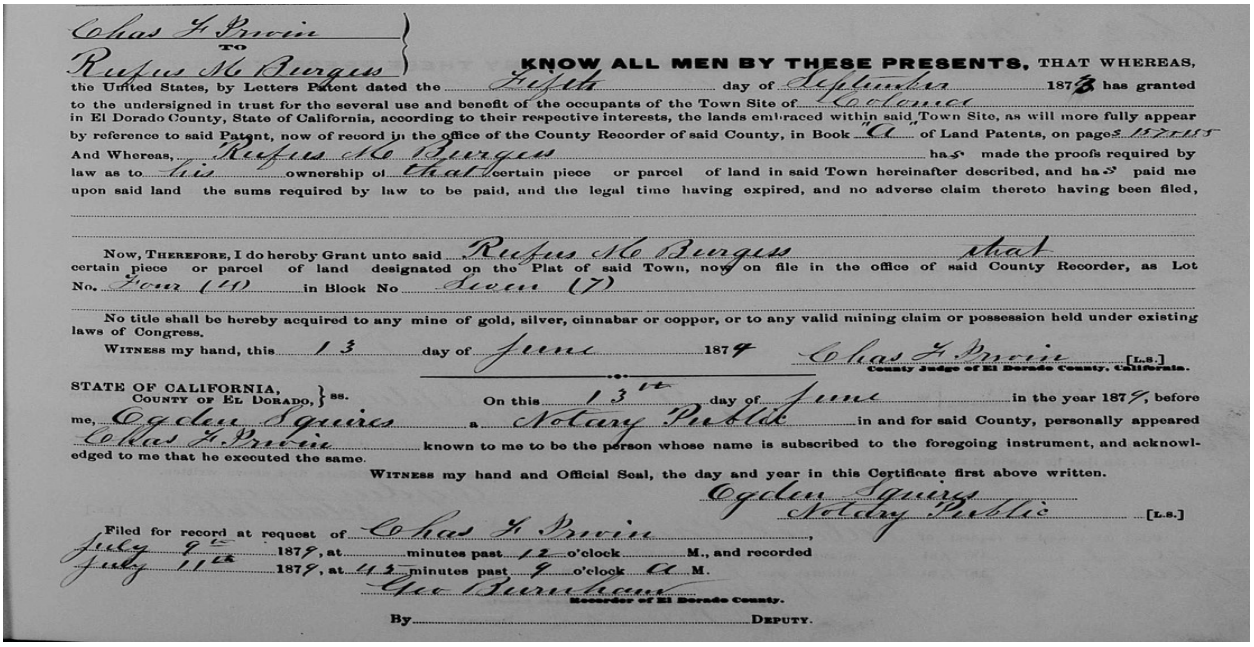
Date of application	Name of Applicant	Lot	Block	Name of Contestant
Aug 26 1876	Edmond De Lory	1	7	
Sept 29 1873	Nancy Gooch	2	7	
Dec 31 1879	Rufus Burgess	3	7	Not Paid - not delin.
Sept 29. 1873	Rufus M Burgess	4	7	
	Vacant	5	7	Sold at Public Sale

30

The following delinquent tax list shows R. M. Burgess in arrears for taxes on Lot 4, Block 7 in February 1876, again showing his occupancy of a portion of African Methodist church property prior to having a recorded title for this lot.


Mountain Democrat, The (Placerville, California)
1876 › February › 5

...County, situated about
... miles ... from the town of Indian Diggings on
the north side of the Indian Diggings or old Emi-
grant road, and known as the Old Pie Pie Ranch:
also personal property. State and county tax, 11 ...
cents 1 50
Burgess, R M—real estate in the town of Colo-
ma El Dorado county being lot 4 block 7, value


Chas F Bruin
TO
Rufus M Burgess

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, THAT WHEREAS, the United States, by Letters Patent dated the Fifth day of September 1873 has granted to the undersigned in trust for the several use and benefit of the occupants of the Town Site of Coloma in El Dorado County, State of California, according to their respective interests, the lands embraced within said Town Site, as will more fully appear by reference to said Patent, now of record in the office of the County Recorder of said County, in Book "A" of Land Patents, on page 157 and 5 And Whereas, Rufus M Burgess has made the proofs required by law as to his ownership of that certain piece or parcel of land in said Town hereinafter described, and has paid me upon said land the sums required by law to be paid, and the legal time having expired, and no adverse claim thereto having been filed,

Now, Therefore, I do hereby Grant unto said Rufus M Burgess that certain piece or parcel of land designated on the Plat of said Town, now on file in the office of said County Recorder, as Lot No. Four (4) in Block No Seven (7)

No title shall be hereby acquired to any mine of gold, silver, cinnabar or copper, or to any valid mining claim or possession held under existing laws of Congress.

Witness my hand, this 13 day of June 1879 Chas F Bruin [L.S.]
County Judge of El Dorado County, California.

State of California, County of El Dorado, } ss. On this 13th day of June in the year 1879, before me, Ogden Squires a Notary Public in and for said County, personally appeared Chas F Bruin known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument, and acknowledged to me that he executed the same.

Witness my hand and Official Seal, the day and year in this Certificate first above written.

Ogden Squires
Notary Public [L.S.]

Filed for record at request of Chas F Bruin,
July 9th 1879, at minutes past 12 o'clock M., and recorded
July 11th 1879, at 45 minutes past 9 o'clock A M.

Geo Burnham
Recorder of El Dorado County.

By Deputy.

31

Rufus Burgess received the title to Lot 4, Block 7, Coloma Townsite in June 1879.

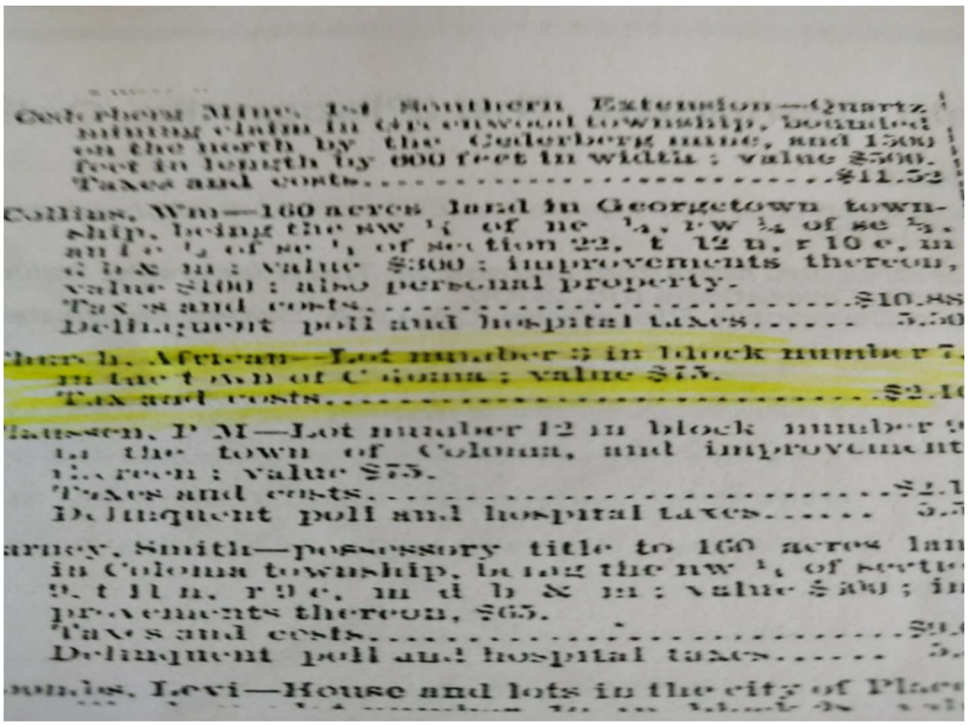
As the decline in mining occurred, El Dorado County experienced a dramatic loss of population. Between the years 1860 and 1870 the population of El Dorado County declined from 20,562 residents to 10,309.

As the miners and the businesses that supplied them moved on to more profitable diggings there were many defaults and the abandonment of properties. Assessor's Lien sales were so frequent that

many appear to have never been recorded with the County Recorder/Clerks office by the purchaser.

The original Trustees of the African Methodist church had moved on and the unlike the Placerville AME church this property was not disposed of as spelled out in the original 1863 deed from Jacob Johnson with the proceeds of the sale to be deposited with the African Methodist Episcopal churches California Conference. Instead, the lots were sold for past due taxes.

The *Mountain Democrat*, in its February 15, 1879, edition, lists properties being in arrears for taxes and scheduled for a lien sale, among those listed is the lot and building belonging to the AME Church that are to be seized and sold for one years back taxes.



Taxes and costs.....$11.52

Collins, Wm—160 acres land in Georgetown township, being the nw ¼ of ne ¼, nw ¼ of se ¼, and [illegible] of se ¼ of section 22, t 12 n, r 10 e, m d b & m; value $800; improvements thereon, value $100; also personal property.
Taxes and costs.....$10.88
Delinquent poll and hospital taxes..... 3.50

Church, African—Lot number 3 in block number 7, in the town of Coloma; value $75.
Tax and costs.....$2.10

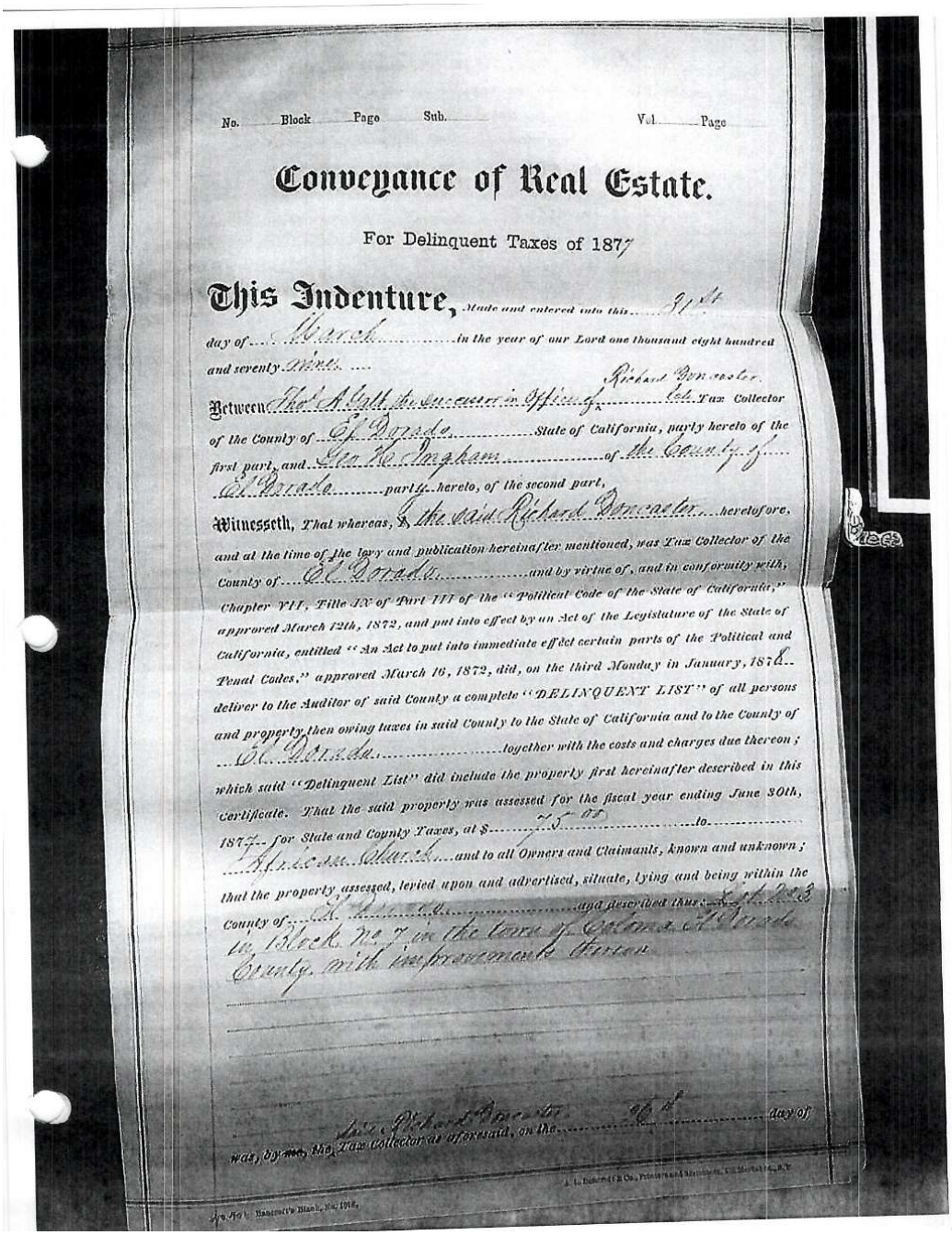
Claussen, P M—Lot number 12 in block number 9 in the town of Coloma, and improvements thereon; value $75.
Taxes and costs.....$2.1
Delinquent poll and hospital taxes..... 3.5

Carney, Smith—possessory title to 160 acres land in Coloma township, being the nw ¼ of section 9, t 11 n, r 9 e, m d b & m; value $80; improvements thereon, $65.
Taxes and costs.....$2.
Delinquent poll and hospital taxes..... 3.

Daniels, Levi—House and lots in the city of Placer

The El Dorado County Tax Assessor lists the African Church property on the Delinquent Tax List of properties to be sold at auction.

On March 26th, 1879. George Ingham purchases the African Methodist Episcopal Church lot from the County at a tax lien sale.



No. Block Page Sub. Vol. Page

Conveyance of Real Estate.

For Delinquent Taxes of 1877

This Indenture, Made and entered into this 9th day of March in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy Nine

Between Richard Doncaster Late Tax Collector of the County of El Dorado State of California, party hereto of the first part, and Geo W Ingham of the County of El Dorado party hereto, of the second part,

Witnesseth, That whereas, I the said Richard Doncaster heretofore, and at the time of the levy and publication hereinafter mentioned, was Tax Collector of the County of El Dorado and by virtue of, and in conformity with, Chapter VII, Title IX of Part III of the "Political Code of the State of California," approved March 12th, 1872, and put into effect by an Act of the Legislature of the State of California, entitled "An Act to put into immediate effect certain parts of the Political and Penal Codes," approved March 16, 1872, did, on the third Monday in January, 1878 deliver to the Auditor of said County a complete "DELINQUENT LIST" of all persons and property then owing taxes in said County to the State of California and to the County of El Dorado together with the costs and charges due thereon; which said "Delinquent List" did include the property first hereinafter described in this Certificate. That the said property was assessed for the fiscal year ending June 30th, 1877 for State and County Taxes, at $ 5 05 to African Church and to all Owners and Claimants, known and unknown; that the property assessed, levied upon and advertised, situate, lying and being within the County of El Dorado and described thus: Lot 203 in Block No 7 in the town of Coloma El Dorado County with improvements thereon

was, by me, the Tax Collector aforesaid, on the 9th day of

Richard Doncaster

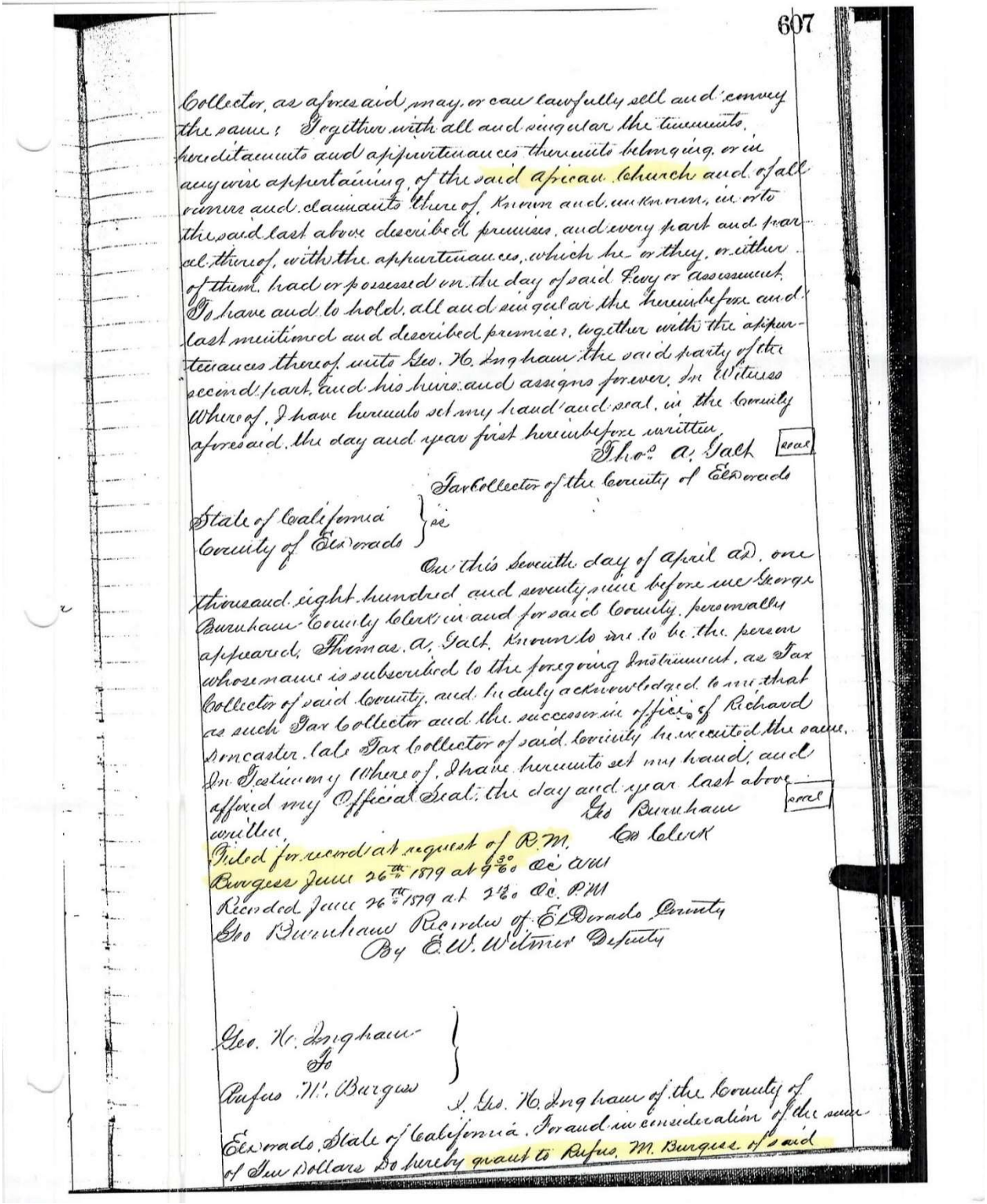
Tax Collector

George Ingham purchase of Lot 3 Block 7, African Church

Thos A. Hall Tax Collector. To Geo. H Ingham

Conveyance of Real Estate for Delinquent Taxes of 1877

This Indenture made and entered into this 31st day of March in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy nine. Between Thos A. Hall the Successor in Office of Richard Doncaster late Tax Collector of the County of Eldorado State of California party hereto of the first part, and Geo. H Ingham of the County of Eldorado party hereto of the second part. Witnesseth. That, whereas the said Richard Doncaster heretofore and at the time of the levy and publication hereinafter mentioned, was Tax Collector of the County of Eldorado, and by virtue of, and in conformity with Chapter VII. Title IX of Part. III. of the Political Code of the State of California "approved March 12th 1872. and put into effect by an Act of the Legislature of the State of California, entitled. "An Act to put into immediate effect certain parts of the Political and Penal Codes" approved March 16. 1872. did on the third Monday in January. 1878 deliver to the auditor of said County a complete "Delinquent List" of all persons and property there owing taxes in said County to the State of California and to the County of Eldorado together with the costs and charges due thereon: which said "Delinquent List" did include



607

Collector, as aforesaid, may, or can lawfully sell and convey the same; Together with all and singular the tenements, hereditaments and appurtenances thereunto belonging, or in anywise appertaining, of the said african church and of all rights and claimants thereof, known and unknown, in or to the said last above described premises, and every part and parcel thereof, with the appurtenances, which he or they, or either of them, had or possessed on the day of said Levy or assessment. To have and to hold, all and singular the hereinbefore and last mentioned and described premises, together with the appurtenances thereof, unto Geo. H. Ingham the said party of the second part, and his heirs and assigns forever. In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal, in the County aforesaid, the day and year first hereinbefore written.

Thos. A. Galt [seal]

Tax Collector of the County of Eldorado

State of California }
County of Eldorado } ss.

On this seventh day of april ad. one thousand eight hundred and seventy nine before me George Burnham County clerk in and for said County, personally appeared, Thomas. A. Galt, known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument, as Tax Collector of said County, and he duly acknowledged to me that as such Tax Collector and the successor in office of Richard Dorncaster, late Tax Collector of said County he executed the same. In Testimony Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, and affixed my Official Seal, the day and year last above written.

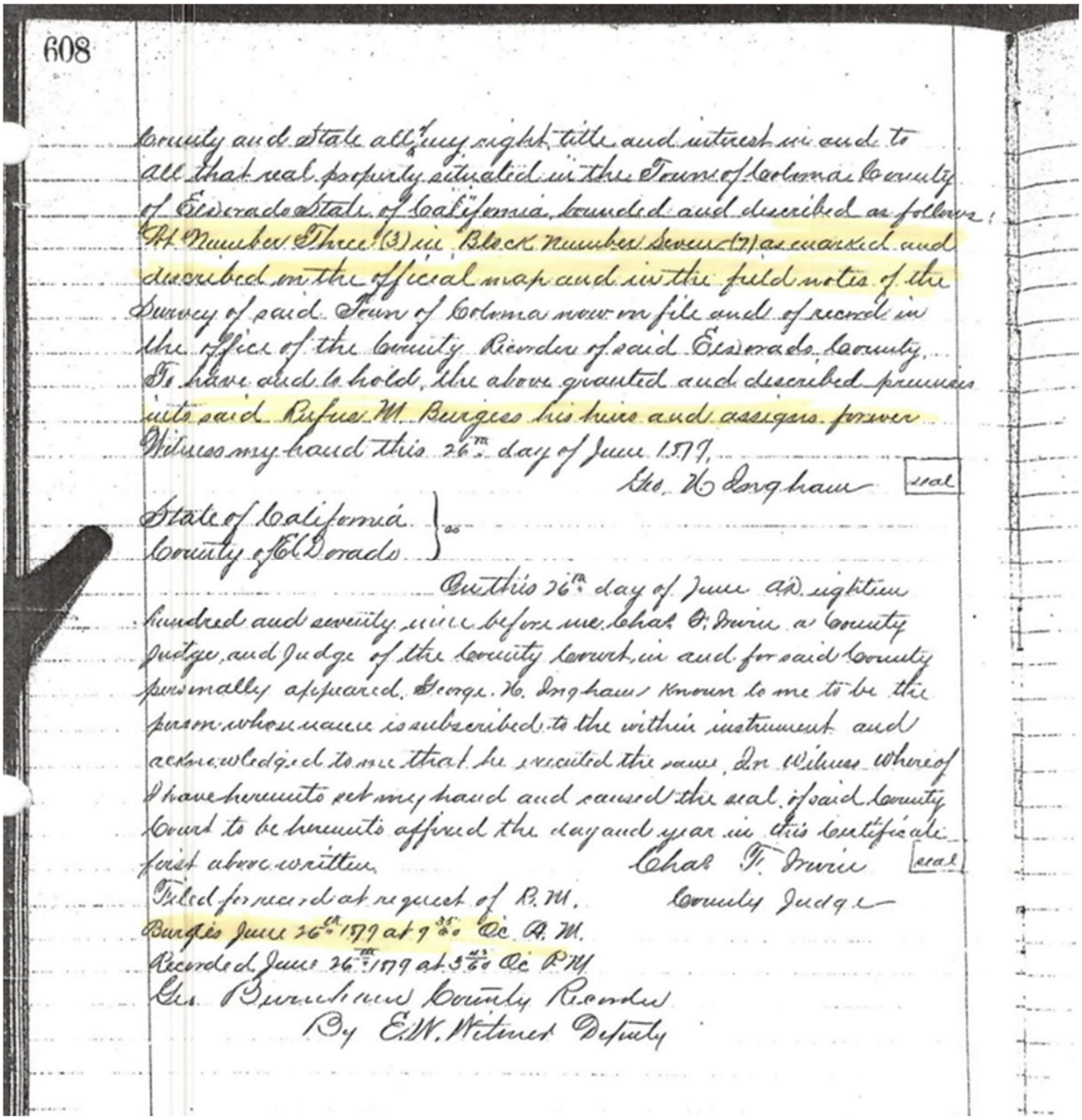
Geo Burnham [seal]
Co Clerk

Filed for record at request of R.M. Burgess June 26th 1879 at 9 30/60 oc AM
Recorded June 26th 1879 at 3 40/60 oc PM
Geo Burnham Recorder of ElDorado County
By E.W. Wilmer Deputy

Geo. H. Ingham
To
Rufus M. Burgess

I, Geo. H. Ingham of the County of Eldorado, State of California, for and in consideration of the sum of Ten Dollars do hereby grant to Rufus M. Burgess of said

Sale of Former African Methodist Episcopal church lot to Rufus Burgess by George Ingham June 1879.



608

County and State all my right title and interest in and to all that real property situated in the Town of Coloma County of Eldorado State of California, bounded and described as follows: Lot Number Three (3) in Block Number Seven (7) as marked and described on the official map and in the field notes of the Survey of said Town of Coloma now on file and of record in the office of the County Recorder of said Eldorado County. To have and to hold the above granted and described premises unto said Rufus M. Burgess his heirs and assigns forever. Witness my hand this 26th day of June 1879.

Geo. N Ingham [seal]

State of California } ss
County of El Dorado }

On this 26th day of June A.D. eighteen hundred and seventy nine before me Chas F. Irwin a County Judge and Judge of the County Court in and for said County personally appeared George N. Ingham known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the within instrument and acknowledged to me that he executed the same. In Witness Whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of said County Court to be hereunto affixed the day and year in this certificate first above written.

Chas F. Irwin [seal]
County Judge

Filed for record at request of R. M. Burgess June 26th 1879 at 9 35/60 A. M.

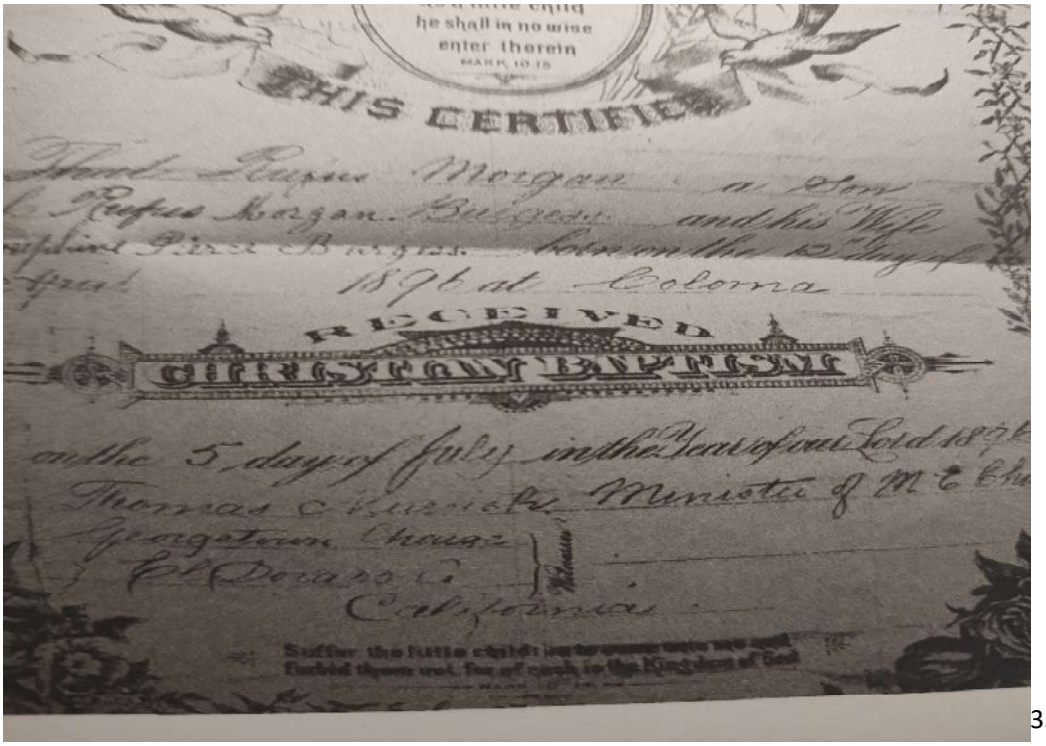
Recorded June 26th 1879 at 3 45/60 P. M.

Geo. Burnham County Recorder
By E. W. Witmer Deputy

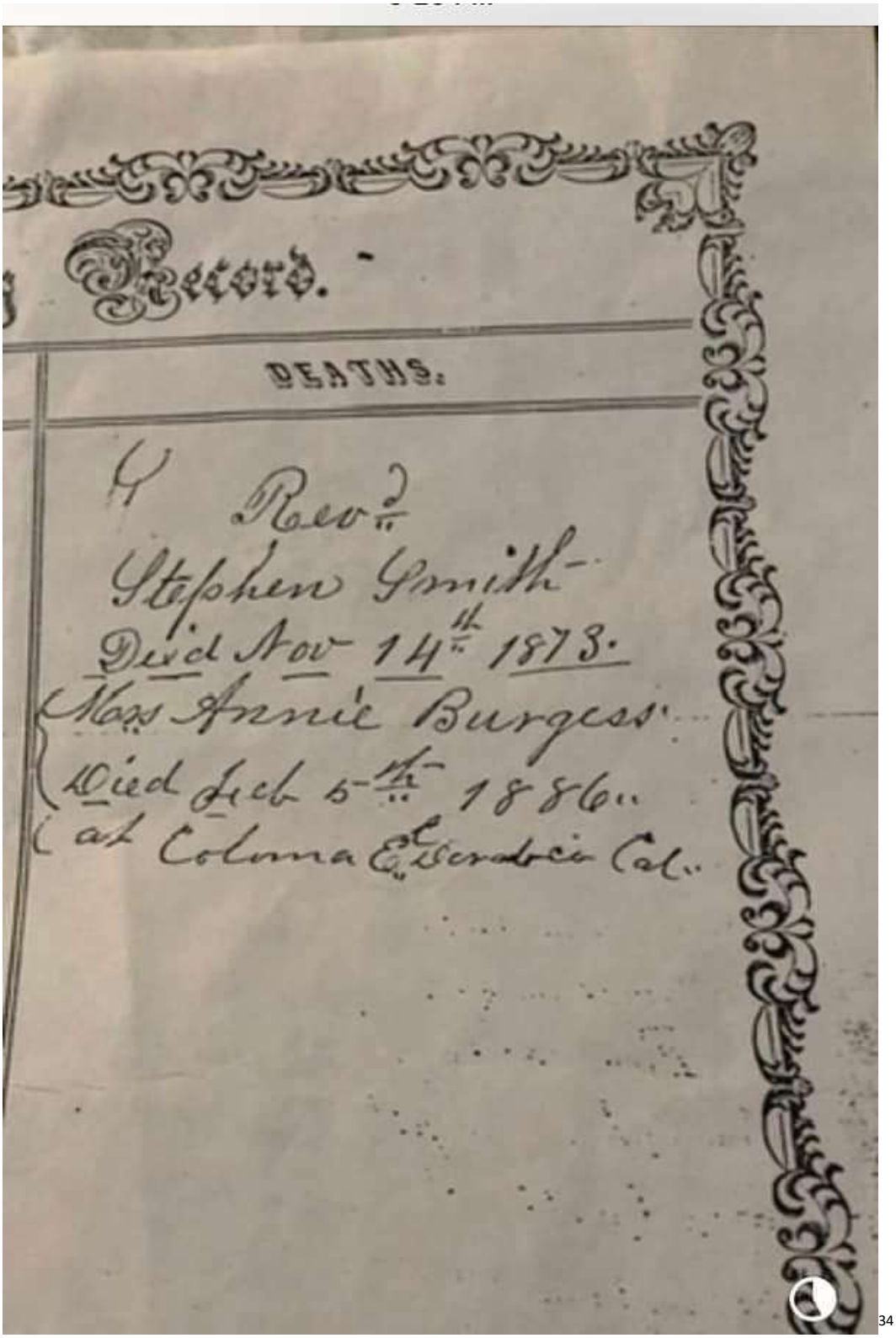
32

The deed dated June 26, 1879, shows George Ingham selling Lot 3, Block 7 to Rufus Burgess. This is the same lot that George Ingham had previously purchased at an El Dorado County lien sale. This parcel previously had previously been owned by the African Methodist Episcopal Church of Coloma.

After 1869 most if not all the Black Baptisms, funerals and marriages in Coloma are again being conducted by the white Methodist Episcopal clergy. Below examples of Smith, Murrish, and Dearborn who were from the white Methodist Episcopal Church, Georgetown Circuit that encompassed Coloma, and Georgetown.


he shall in no wise
enter therein
MARK 10 15
THIS CERTIFIES
Rufus Morgan
Rufus Morgan Burgess
and his Wife
1870 at Coloma
RECEIVED
CHRISTIAN BAPTISM
on the 5 day of July in the Year of our Lord 1870
Thomas C Murrish Minister of M E Ch
Georgetown Circuit
El Dorado Co
California
Suffer the little children to come unto me and
forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of God
33

Marriage license signed by Tomas Murrish, pastor to the Georgetown Methodist Episcopal Circuit that included Coloma.

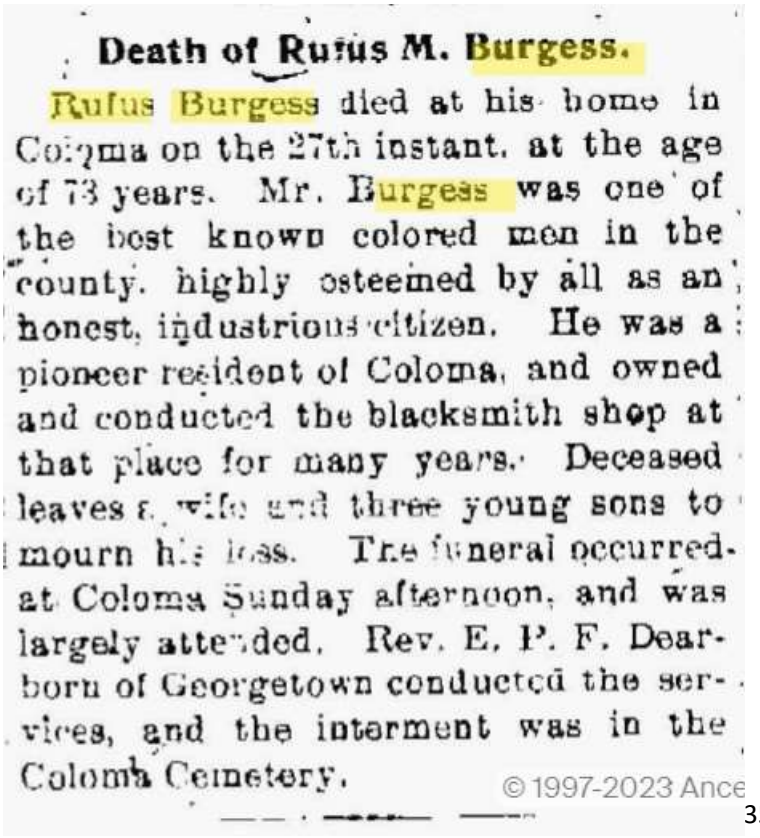

Record.

DEATHS.

4 Rev.d
Stephen Smith
Died Nov 14th 1873.
Mrs Annie Burgess
Died Feb 5th 1886
at Coloma El Dorado Co.

34

Death certificate signed by Pastor Stephen Smith of the Georgetown Methodist Episcopal Circuit that included Coloma.



Death of Rufus M. Burgess.

Rufus Burgess died at his home in Coloma on the 27th instant, at the age of 73 years. Mr. Burgess was one of the best known colored men in the county, highly esteemed by all as an honest, industrious citizen. He was a pioneer resident of Coloma, and owned and conducted the blacksmith shop at that place for many years. Deceased leaves a wife and three young sons to mourn his loss. The funeral occurred at Coloma Sunday afternoon, and was largely attended. Rev. E. P. F. Dearborn of Georgetown conducted the services, and the interment was in the Coloma Cemetery.

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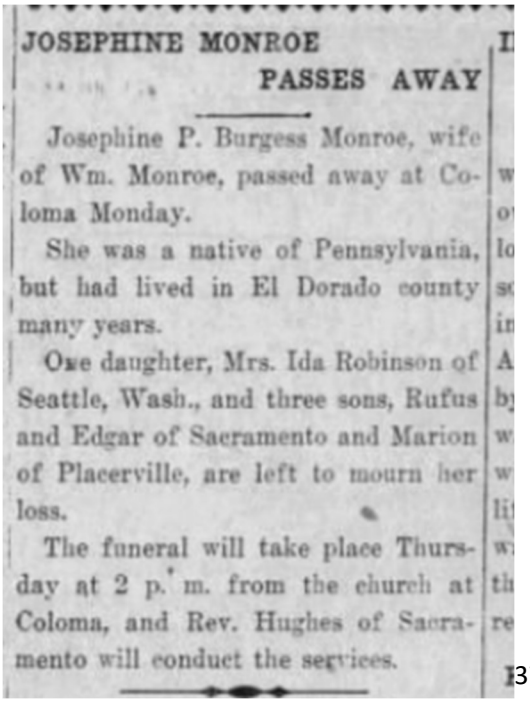
Obituary listing the Reverend Dearborn of the Georgetown Methodist Episcopal Circuit that included Coloma.

The Methodist Episcopal Church continued to serve the Black residents of Coloma as shown with the Rev. G. J. Wentzell provided services for the various Julian family members.[36]



JOSEPHINE MONROE PASSES AWAY

Josephine P. Burgess Monroe, wife of Wm. Monroe, passed away at Coloma Monday.

She was a native of Pennsylvania, but had lived in El Dorado county many years.

One daughter, Mrs. Ida Robinson of Seattle, Wash., and three sons, Rufus and Edgar of Sacramento and Marion of Placerville, are left to mourn her loss.

The funeral will take place Thursday at 2 p. m. from the church at Coloma, and Rev. Hughes of Sacramento will conduct the services.

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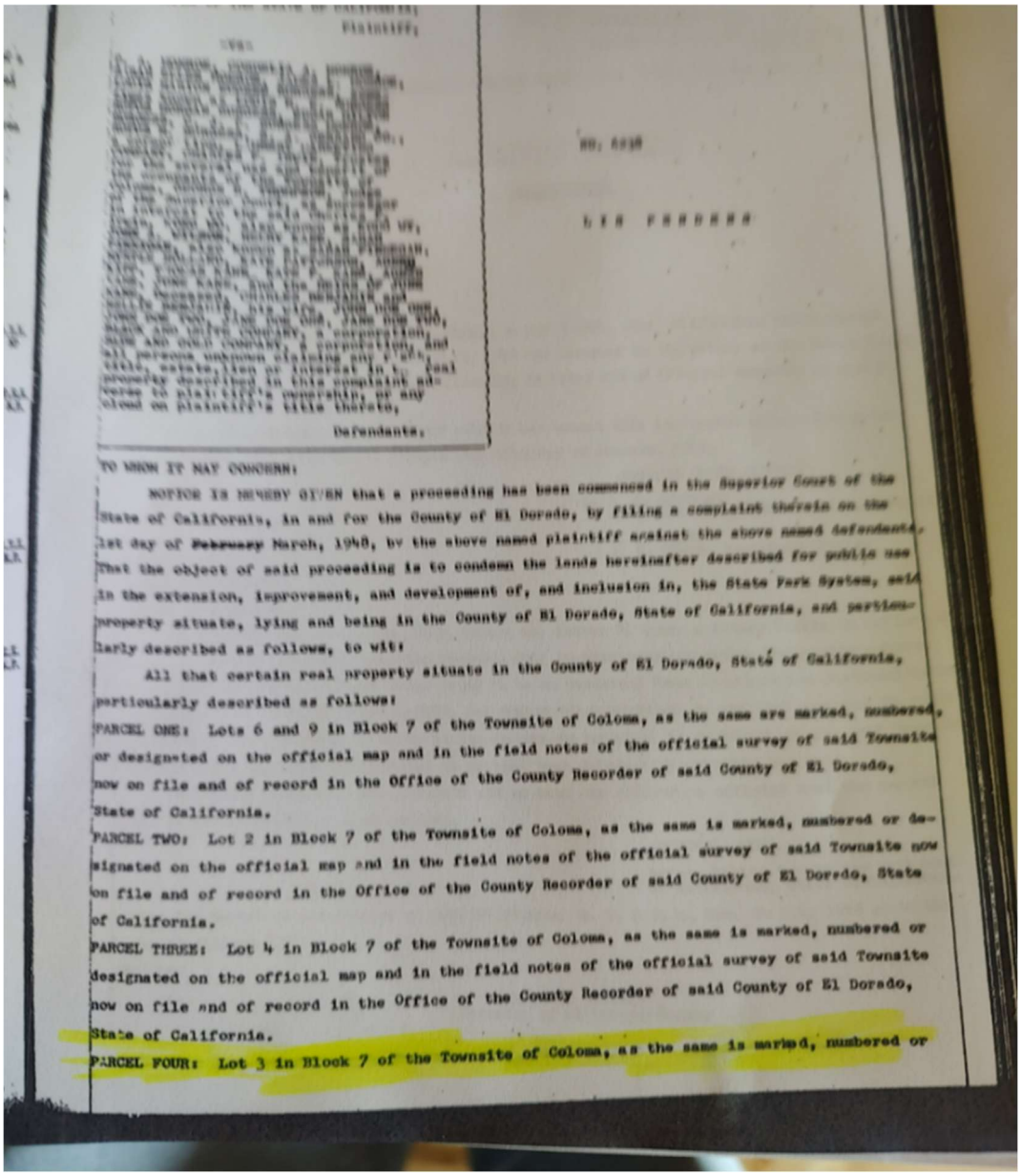
At the request of her sons now living in Sacramento, the Rev. Hughes pastor of the St. Andrews AME church in Sacramento comes to Coloma in January 1921 to officiate the funeral of their mother Josephine Burgess. This funeral marked the first time since 1868 that an African Methodist Episcopal preacher was in Coloma.

Final Deed Transfer under Condemnation to the State of California occurred in 1949. Under Final Condemnation Orders, the State of California purchased two lots owned by the descendants of Rufus Burgess. These lots previously were owned by Jacob Johnson, George Ingham, and the African Methodist Episcopal Church.



Plaintiff;

vs.

Defendants.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a proceeding has been commenced in the Superior Court of the State of California, in and for the County of El Dorado, by filing a complaint therein on the 1st day of ~~February~~ March, 1948, by the above named plaintiff against the above named defendants. That the object of said proceeding is to condemn the lands hereinafter described for public use in the extension, improvement, and development of, and inclusion in, the State Park System, said property situate, lying and being in the County of El Dorado, State of California, and particularly described as follows, to wit:

All that certain real property situate in the County of El Dorado, State of California, particularly described as follows:

PARCEL ONE: Lots 6 and 9 in Block 7 of the Townsite of Coloma, as the same are marked, numbered, or designated on the official map and in the field notes of the official survey of said Townsite now on file and of record in the Office of the County Recorder of said County of El Dorado, State of California.

PARCEL TWO: Lot 2 in Block 7 of the Townsite of Coloma, as the same is marked, numbered or designated on the official map and in the field notes of the official survey of said Townsite now on file and of record in the Office of the County Recorder of said County of El Dorado, State of California.

PARCEL THREE: Lot 4 in Block 7 of the Townsite of Coloma, as the same is marked, numbered or designated on the official map and in the field notes of the official survey of said Townsite now on file and of record in the Office of the County Recorder of said County of El Dorado, State of California.

PARCEL FOUR: Lot 3 in Block 7 of the Townsite of Coloma, as the same is marked, numbered or

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Modern day view of orignial AME properties

Excerpt from National Park Service's 2004, *A History of Black Americans in California:*

A.M.E. Church

By the time, the Third Annual Convention of Ministers and lay delegates to the California Conference met in September 1863, substantial and comfortable houses of worship stood in Coloma, Marysville, Sacramento, Stockton, San Francisco, Grass Valley, and Nevada City. All that remains in most gold mining towns to designate the first sites of Black political activity are the words, "African Church," written across lots on nineteenth-century property maps.[40]

The final 1949 condemnation and sale of the former African Methodist Episcopal church property ended a succession of title beginning in 1853 ending another era of Coloma's rich religious history

Chapter 2

Methodist Episcopal Church

Methodist Episcopal Church Timeline

1849

- Clarkson Dye a lay preacher arrives in March and preaches in his unfinished hotel, then in May Pastors Roberts, Anthony, and Damon preached and organized a congregation.
  First recorded wedding in Coloma performed by Rev. Anthony.

1850

- Official organization of a church. Appointment of a committee to secure a lot for a parsonage and a church.
- Reverend Mathew Lassiter is appointed as interim pastor.
- Issac Owen establishes the Methodist Episcopal school.

1851

- Reverend Bateman arrives in Coloma.

1852

- Methodists are meeting in the Marchant owned building situated behind the courthouse and next to the Robertson lot.

1854

- Reverend James Rogers is listed as pastor and reporting eight members.
- John Marchand reports that he has sold the church property as it was unfit for use. The proceeds of $700.00 were donated towards a church and parsonage.
- The *Empire Argus* reports, we hope to have in a short time a new Methodist church."

1855

- The Methodist school becomes public.

1856

- Martin V. Cloud (brother of Jenny Wimmer) donates a lot for the Methodist church for the already constructed parsonage on Sacramento Street.

1857

- The Methodist church parsonage appears on the Herman Au map of Coloma.

1861

- Reverend William Smith is now living at the parsonage on Sacramento Street.
- Reverend Smith is reporting the church on Sacramento Street is need of $500.00 in repairs.

1863

- Reverend Smith reports that the Sacramento Street church is unfit for use, and they are now meeting in the I.O.O.F. Hall.

1870

- The Methodist Episcopal church discontinued meeting in the I.O.O.F. Hall and are now jointly sharing use of the Emmanuel Episcopal church on Church Street.

1873

- The Methodist Episcopal church circuit parsonage is moved to Georgetown.
- The Methodist Episcopal church lot on Sacramento Street is listed as tax delinquent and shown on the lien sale list of El Dorado County.

- Sam Brockway purchases the Methodist Episcopal church property on Sacramento Street at El Dorado County lien sale.

1921

- The Emmanuel Episcopal Church and lot are grant deeded to the Methodist Episcopal Church of Coloma by Bishop Moreland of the Sacramento Episcopal Diocese.
- The name of the church is changed to the Emmanuel Methodist Episcopal Church.

1969

- The Emmanuel Methodist church is deeded to the State of California.

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Methodist Episcopal Church

A Mr. Clarkson Dye, while not an ordained minister, but a past Methodist Episcopal church class leader arrived from New York in March of 1849. He was chronicled in James Marshall's diary as *"a smooth-tongued impecunious Yankee came to Coloma and preached a few sermons in the streets to those miners who cared to listen to him."*[1] Clarkson went on to build the Dye hotel that later was renamed the Winters Hotel. Clarkson also became a part owner of Sutter's original sawmill. While Clarkson was not acting in any official Methodist Episcopal capacity, his short lived preaching was credited as the first Methodist Episcopal presence in Coloma.

While there are written accounts of the Methodist Episcopal churches' various locations in Coloma. To date no photos of the earliest structure behind the County Court House have surfaced and only one showing Sacramento Street's location has been found.

The first official Methodist Episcopal church presence was reported to be Reverend Damon, J. H. Dye, and William Robert's arrival in Coloma in 1849. Damon who later was known to be the missionary to Sailors in the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii). Little has been found describing his presence in Coloma.

The Methodist Episcopal Church in Coloma was officially organized in 1850 by the Reverend Isaac Owen as being the first church in the gold country. Not only did he organize white Methodist Episcopal churches in California, but he also helped with the establishment and building of African Methodist Episcopal Churches. Most notable was the St. Andrews AME church in Sacramento. [2]

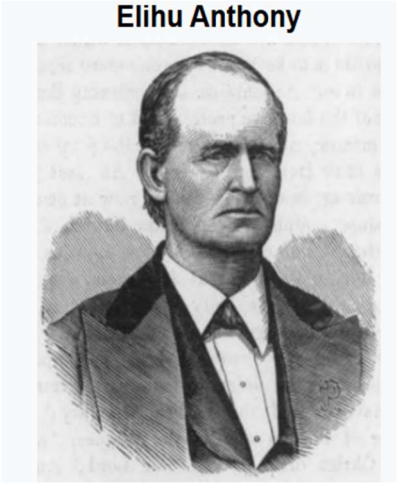
Up until 1863 the Methodist Episcopal church in Coloma provided services to the Black population of the Uniontown circuit which then was comprised of Coloma, Diamond Springs, Cold Springs, Georgetown, and Uniontown (Lotus).[3] During his time in California, he and the Elder T.M.D. Ward of the African Methodist Church wrote to each other extensively over the needs of the African Methodist Episcopal Churches in California.[4]

ISAAC OWEN

5

The first record of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Coloma is as follows:

"In 1849 May, Pastors Roberts, Anthony, and Damen Preached and Organized a Church with Anthony[6] as the Pastor. A few children were found, and a Sunday School was established. Meetings are held in the Bennett house. Silas Bennett an employee of Sutter was appointed Class Leader." Rev. Anthony. [7]



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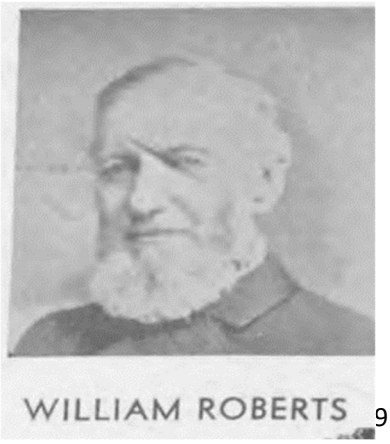
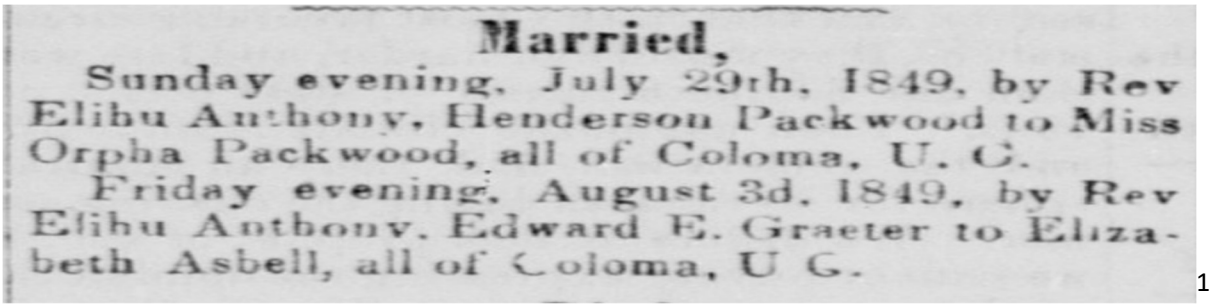


9

In the 1849 sermon referenced above, William Roberts was denouncing the sins which he found rampant in the valley. The collection plate offering included two sacks of gold. One had a note: "To the man from Oregon (Rev. Roberts): This bag is for the preacher who isn't afraid to

speak out what he believes to be true." The bag contained $20.00 worth of gold. The other bag with Mr. Damon's name on it contained half the amount and was without comment. The cards were signed by the biggest gambler in town.[10]

The first marriages performed in Coloma were in 1849 prior to California Statehood by the Rev. Elihu Anthony. Note the listing as Coloma, Upper California.



Married,

Sunday evening, July 29th, 1849, by Rev Elihu Anthony, Henderson Packwood to Miss Orpha Packwood, all of Coloma, U. C.

Friday evening, August 3d, 1849, by Rev Elihu Anthony, Edward E. Graeter to Elizabeth Asbell, all of Coloma, U C.

[11]

Early documentation of Coloma's Methodist Episcopal Church are as follows:

> *On April 22, 1850, official organization of a Methodist Episcopal Church. A committee appointed to secure a lot or lots for a Parsonage and consider the practicality of building a meeting house. Rev. Anthony.*[12]

Coloma through the years was part of different circuits, all under control of the Sacramento and Marysville Districts of the Oregon/California Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The succession of ministers that served Coloma directly are best detailed in Upton's *Churches of El Dorado County*[13] as these records

came from the archives from the now known as the Federated Church of Placerville. The records from the books by Rev. Anthony[14] and Irvin Engle[15] are not as detailed and tend to skip over some temporary appointments of pastors to Coloma and the circuits that it was part of.

1849 Elihu Anthony
1850 Warren Oliver
1850 Mathew Lissiter
1850 Warren Oliver
1851 L.S. Bateman
1852 Rev. Bonar
1853 Warren Oliver
1854 W.S. Urmy
1855 James Rodgers
1856 A.S. Gibson
1857 Leonard Clark
1858 James Rodgers
1858 R.W. Williamson
1860 B.F. Meyers and Ben Fish
1861 W.N. Smith and A.N. Fisher
1864 C.A. Hertel
1866 W.N. Smith
1868 N.R. Peck
1871 George Larkin
1872 James Burns
1873 Martin Miller
1876 S.C. Elliott
1879 W.S. Corwin
1881 J.E. Jones
1881 Silas Belknap
1886 Thomas Spencer

Irvin Engle from University of the Pacific stated that after Spencer the circuit was sporadic, and Coloma was a part time preaching location except for the years 1863-1868.

We found the names Murrish, Dearborn, Barron and Winkley, but the dates are not certain.[16] The Federated Church in Placerville maintains a list of Pastors since 1850. This list does not indicate who also had duties in Coloma.

We do have confirmation that Rev. A. J. Nelson wrote about spending the night on a hill overlooking the Mill site talking to the new schoolteacher in Coloma. They talked about the values of life and existence. That teacher was Edwin Markham.[17]

M. E. SUNDAY SCHOOL ANNIVERSARY SUNDAY

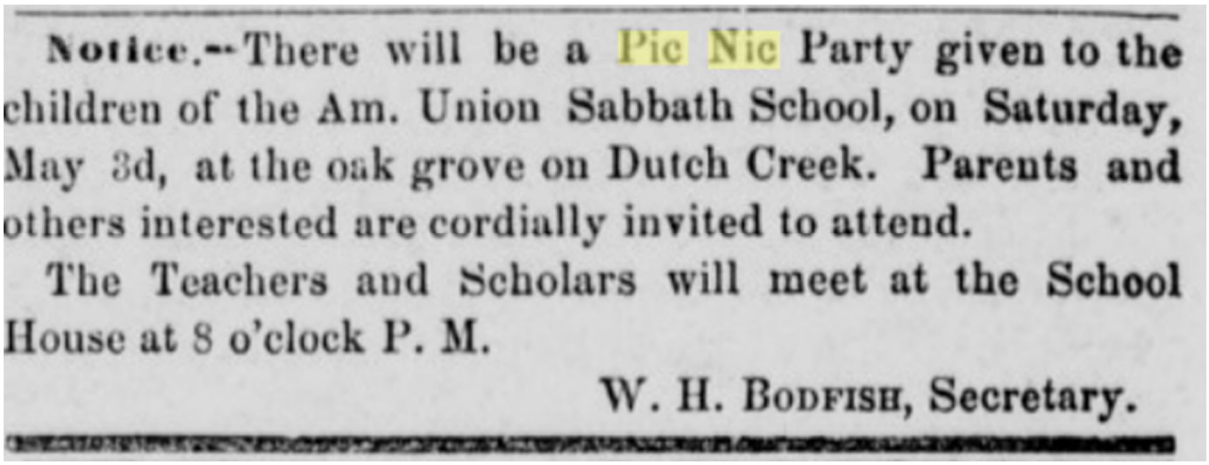
In the month of April, 1850 the Sunday school of the Methodist church was organized. The Seventieth Anniversary will be celebrated with a beautiful service at morning hour of worship next Sunday. The children of the Sunday school have prepared a childrens day program with recitations and songs. All those who have served as officers of the school will be given a special invitation. This is the second Sunday school organized in the county. Coloma has the honor of being ahead of Placerville. The public is cordially invited to this anniversary. Sunday at 11 a. m.

18

In 1920 the Methodists celebrated the April 1850 establishment of the first Sunday School in El Dorado County.

The Sunday School established by Issac Owen was only randomly mentioned in the period newspapers.

An 1854 Methodist Sunday School in Coloma



Notice.—There will be a Pic Nic Party given to the children of the Am. Union Sabbath School, on Saturday, May 3d, at the oak grove on Dutch Creek. Parents and others interested are cordially invited to attend.

The Teachers and Scholars will meet at the School House at 8 o'clock P. M.

W. H. Bodfish, Secretary.

19

Sadly, little information has survived with details the American Union Sabbath School in Coloma, besides that they met in the Methodist church. Hopefully, a complete history will one day be located.

In February 1854, the Methodist Bishop Mathew Simpson of the Oregon and California Circuit, a noted abolitionist and close friend of President Lincoln made visits to the mining towns of the state and to El Dorado County.

Bishop Simpson.

Messrs. Editors: I notice that the press is a little "behind the times," in regard to the movements and appointments of Bishop Simpson. He preached in Sonora on last Sabbath, and at Stockton on Tuesday night. On Wednesday night, he tarried in this city, and this morning, (Thursday,) left for Mormon Island, where he will preach to-night. On to-morrow night (Friday) he will preach at Coloma. On Saturday, at some hour in the day, will preach at Cold Springs. On next Sabbath, at 10½ o'clock, he will dedicate Rev. Mr. Turner's Church at Diamond Springs; at night of the same day, he will preach in Placerville. On next Monday night, he will preach in Mud Springs, and from thence proceed to Sacramento, to preside over the deliberations of the California Annual Conference, which will convene on Thursday, the 16th instant.

Sacramento, Feb. 9, 1854. B. F. R.

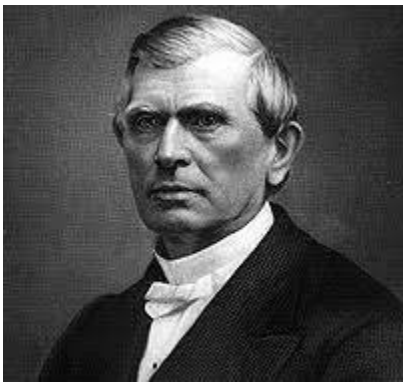
20

Bishop Simpson's diary entry after leaving Sacramento contained the following:

Friday, Feb. 10.—By stage twenty-three miles to Coloma; preached at night.

Saturday, Feb. 11.—Visited mill-race where gold was first found; walked over high hills to Uniontown and back, three miles; rode to Cold Springs on horseback, five miles; preached at two P.M.; rode horseback six miles to Diamond Springs.

Sunday, Feb. 12.—Dedicated church; a severe snow-storm; rode in storm to Placerville, horseback, three miles; addressed Sunday-school at three; preached at night.[21]

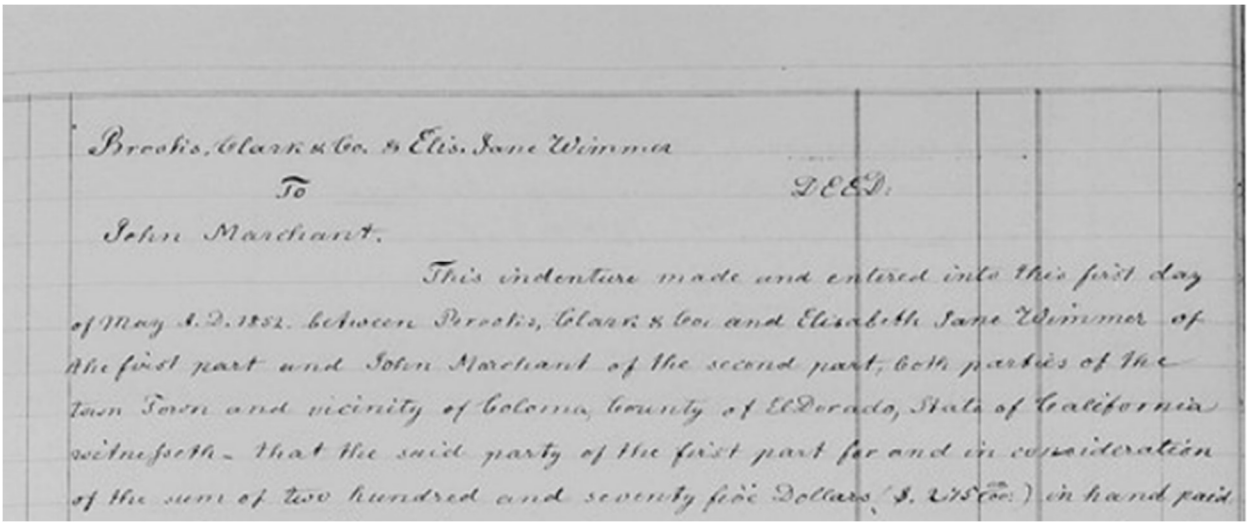


Bishop Mathew Simpson[22]

Alan Patera writes in *Coloma First Town of the Mountains*, Pages 33 & 85, "the first Church in Coloma being built by the Methodists in 1852 but sold under debt in 1854."

The location of this first church building, cited in the deed of the property to John Marchant from Peter and Elisabeth Wimmer, was described as behind the Court House and next to the Robertson's lot.

It is noteworthy that John Marchant purchased this lot from Wimmer's in May of 1852. This lot was facing the proposed Town Square.



Brooks, Clark & Co. & Eliz. Jane Wimmer

To DEED.

John Marchant.

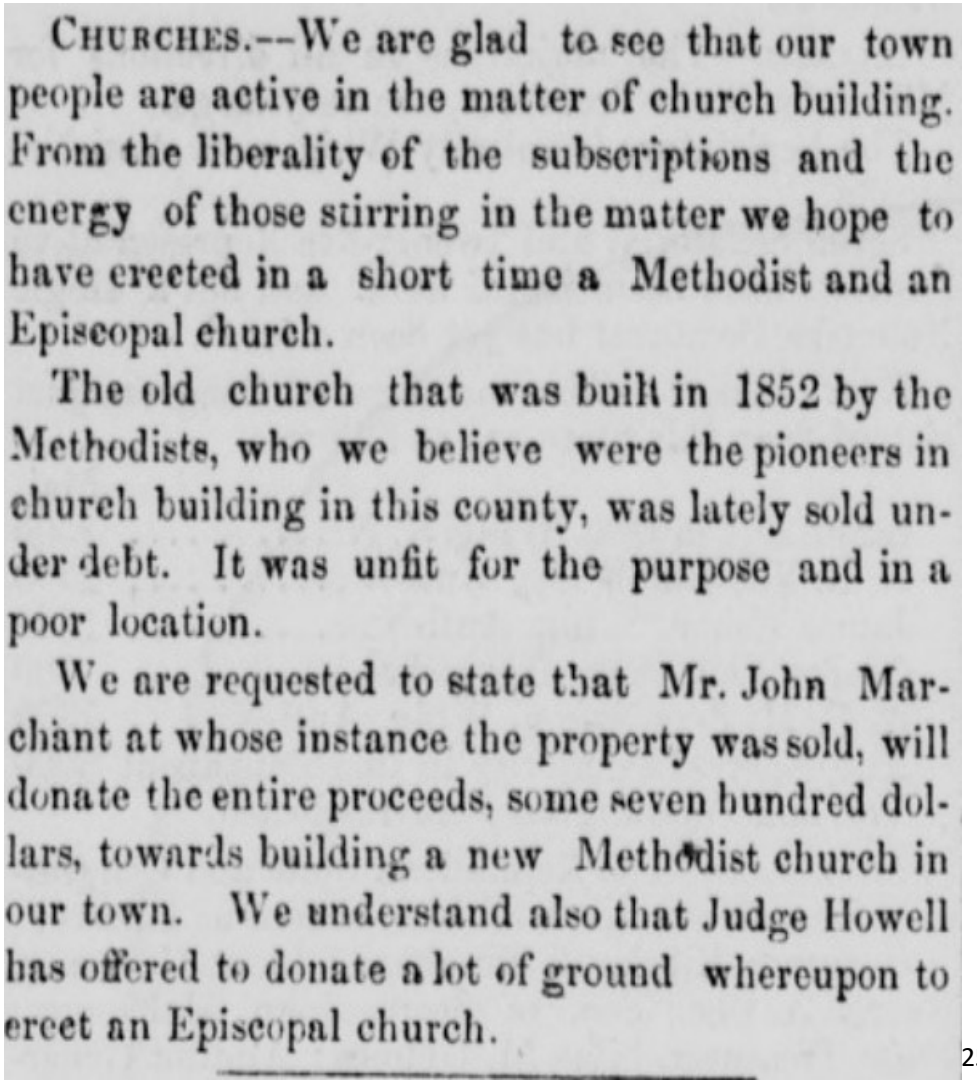
This indenture made and entered into this first day of May A.D. 1852. between Brooks, Clark & Co. and Elizabeth Jane Wimmer of the first part and John Marchant of the second part; both parties of the Town Town and vicinity of Coloma, County of ElDorado, State of California witnesseth - that the said party of the first part for and in consideration of the sum of two hundred and seventy five Dollars ($. 275 Cts.) in hand paid

23

The December 16, 1854, the edition of the *Empire County Argus* newspaper states that the original church was sold by Mr. John Marchant as the property was unfit for the purpose and in a poor location. Mr. Marchant donated the proceeds of the sale, $700.00, to building a new church.

There are references in previous publications to a fire destroying the original church. No period newspaper or personal accounts of a fire destroying the original church have been located. However, on July 14, 1852, the Methodist Church in Georgetown burned with the rest of the town. Georgetown was part of the Coloma Circuit. [24]

Another unsubstantiated report stated the first Methodist Episcopal church building in Coloma had only a canvas roof.

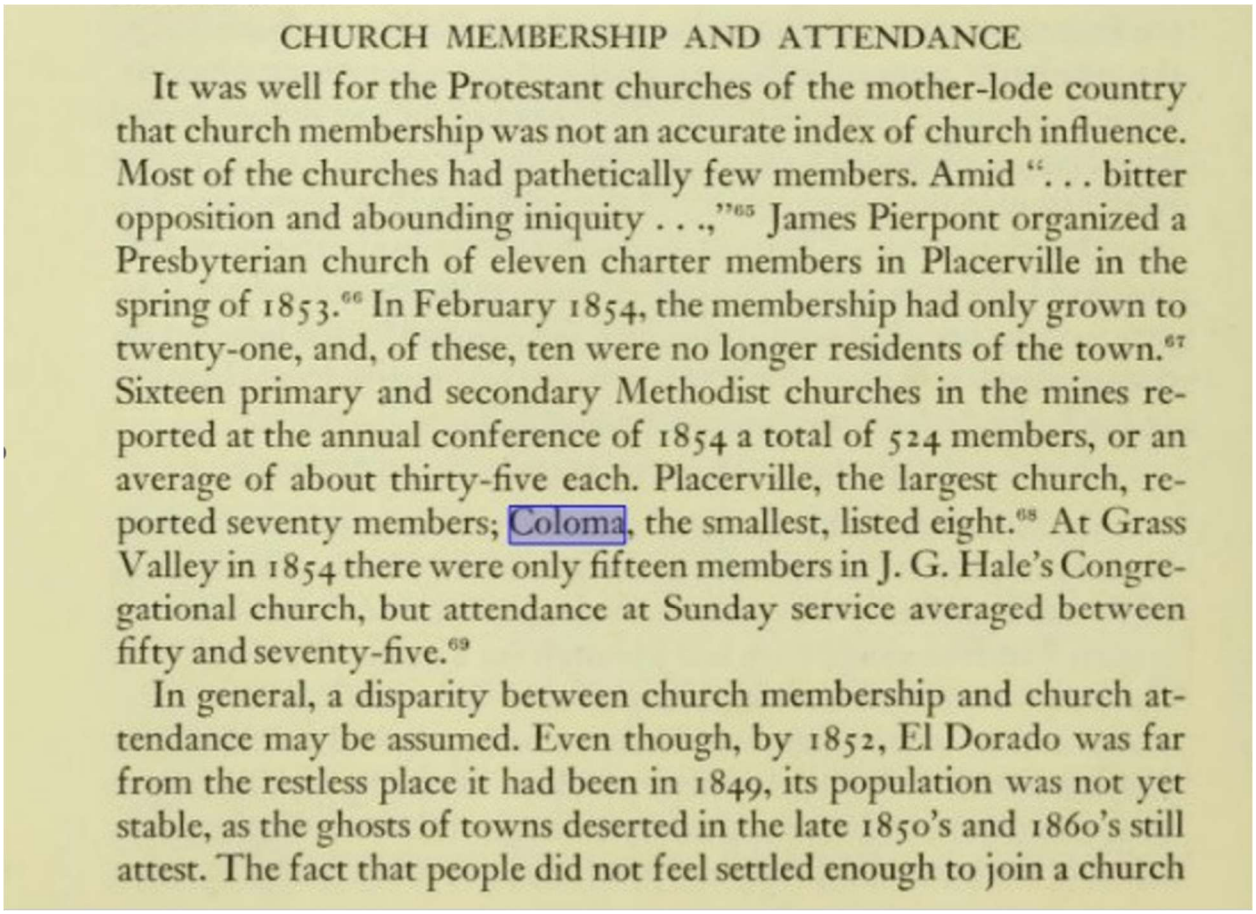


CHURCHES.--We are glad to see that our town people are active in the matter of church building. From the liberality of the subscriptions and the energy of those stirring in the matter we hope to have erected in a short time a Methodist and an Episcopal church.

The old church that was built in 1852 by the Methodists, who we believe were the pioneers in church building in this county, was lately sold under debt. It was unfit for the purpose and in a poor location.

We are requested to state that Mr. John Marchant at whose instance the property was sold, will donate the entire proceeds, some seven hundred dollars, towards building a new Methodist church in our town. We understand also that Judge Howell has offered to donate a lot of ground whereupon to erect an Episcopal church.

25



CHURCH MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE

It was well for the Protestant churches of the mother-lode country that church membership was not an accurate index of church influence. Most of the churches had pathetically few members. Amid ". . . bitter opposition and abounding iniquity . . .,"[65] James Pierpont organized a Presbyterian church of eleven charter members in Placerville in the spring of 1853.[66] In February 1854, the membership had only grown to twenty-one, and, of these, ten were no longer residents of the town.[67] Sixteen primary and secondary Methodist churches in the mines reported at the annual conference of 1854 a total of 524 members, or an average of about thirty-five each. Placerville, the largest church, reported seventy members; Coloma, the smallest, listed eight.[68] At Grass Valley in 1854 there were only fifteen members in J. G. Hale's Congregational church, but attendance at Sunday service averaged between fifty and seventy-five.[69]

In general, a disparity between church membership and church attendance may be assumed. Even though, by 1852, El Dorado was far from the restless place it had been in 1849, its population was not yet stable, as the ghosts of towns deserted in the late 1850's and 1860's still attest. The fact that people did not feel settled enough to join a church

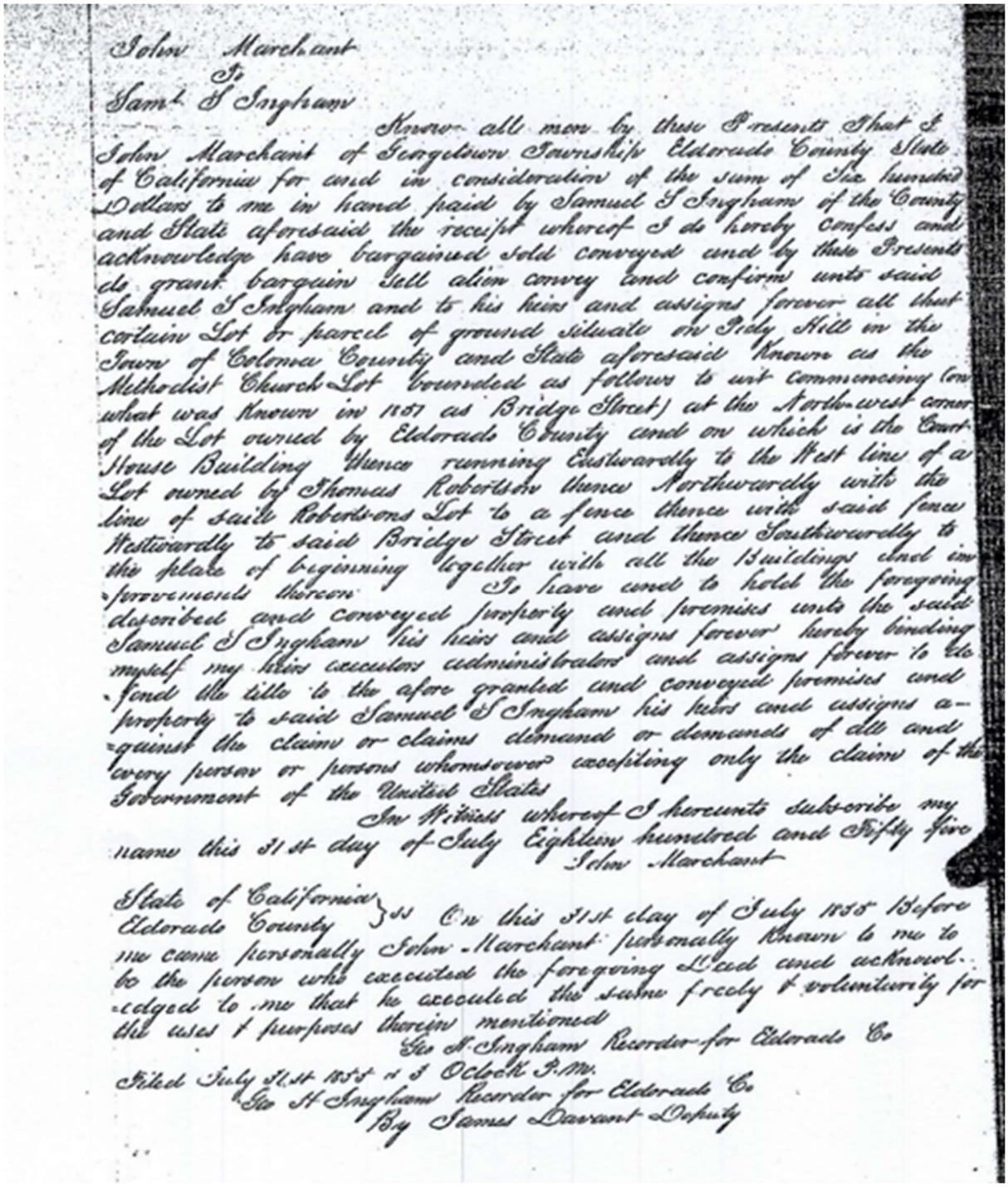
26

The 1854 Methodist church attendance reports show the Coloma church has eight members. Unfortunately, no records of the membership have been located.

Location of original Methodist Church behind the Courthouse and next to the Robertson property.

[27]1873 Hermon Au Map overlaid with ArcGIS Pro software to 2023 Hwy. 49 map.

Sale of the first Methodist church building and lot by John Marchant in July 1855.



John Marchant
To
Sam[l] S Ingham

Know all men by these Presents That I John Marchant of Georgetown Township Eldorado County State of California for and in consideration of the sum of Six hundred Dollars to me in hand paid by Samuel S Ingham of the County and State aforesaid the receipt whereof I do hereby confess and acknowledge have bargained sold conveyed and by these Presents do grant bargain Sell alien convey and confirm unto said Samuel S Ingham and to his heirs and assigns forever all that certain Lot or parcel of ground situate on Tidy Hill in the Town of Coloma County and State aforesaid Known as the Methodist Church Lot bounded as follows to wit Commencing (on what was known in 1851 as Bridge Street) at the North-west corner of the Lot owned by Eldorado County and on which is the Court House Building thence running Eastwardly to the West line of a Lot owned by Thomas Roberts on thence Northwardly with the line of said Roberts-ons Lot to a fence thence with said fence Westwardly to said Bridge Street and thence Southwardly to the place of beginning together with all the Buildings and improvements thereon To have and to hold the foregoing described and conveyed property and premises unto the said Samuel S Ingham his heirs and assigns forever hereby binding myself my heirs executors administrators and assigns forever to defend the title to the afore granted and conveyed premises and property to said Samuel S Ingham his heirs and assigns against the claims or claims demands or demands of all and every person or persons whomsoever excepting only the claims of the Government of the United States

In Witness whereof I hereunto subscribe my name this 31st day of July Eighteen hundred and Fifty five

John Marchant

State of California } ss On this 31st day of July 1855 before
Eldorado County } me came personally John Marchant personally known to me to
be the person who executed the foregoing Deed and acknowledged to me that he executed the same freely & voluntarily for
the uses & purposes therein mentioned

Geo S Ingham Recorder for Eldorado Co

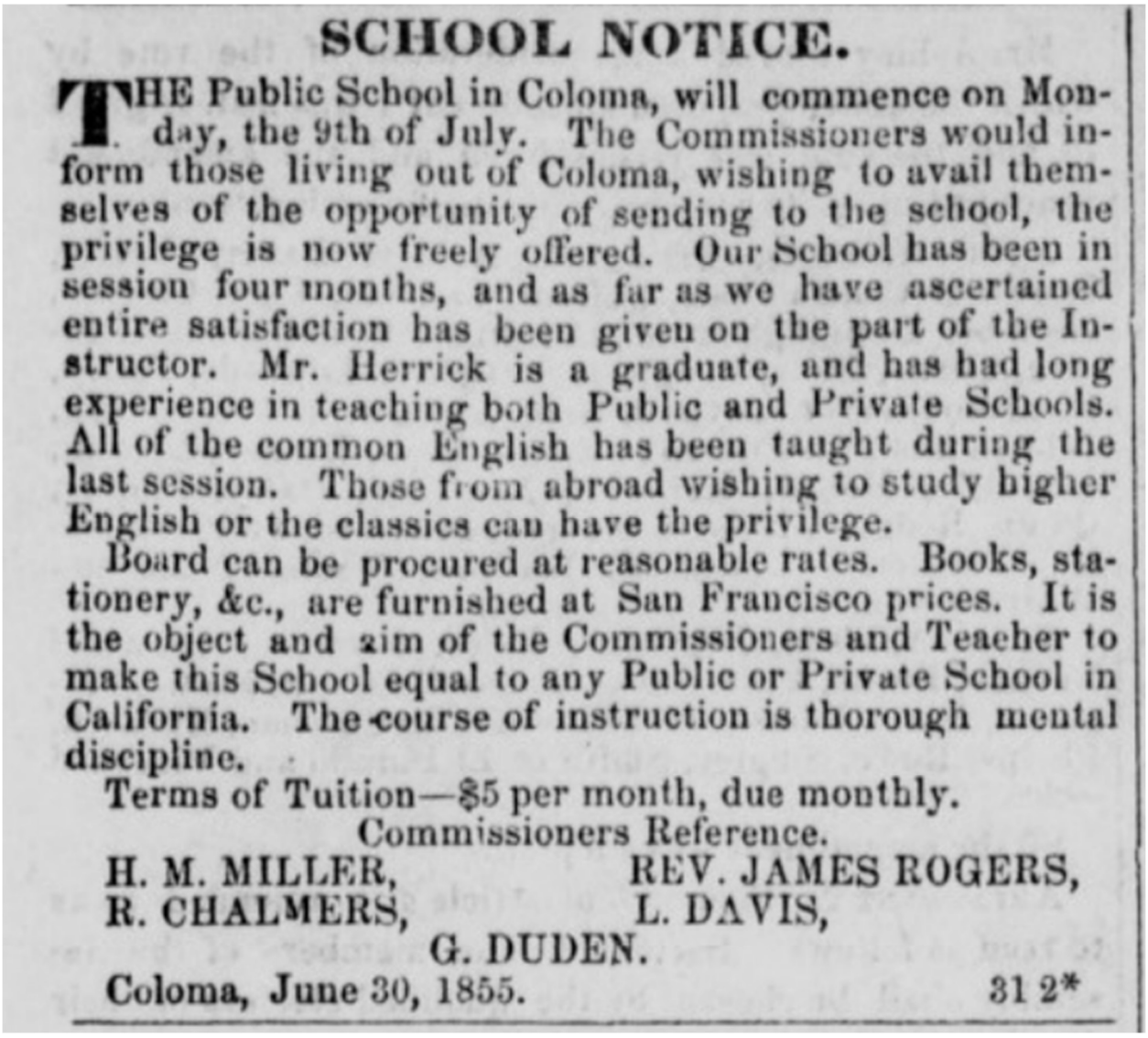
Filed July 31st 1855 at 3 Oclock P.M.

Geo S Ingham Recorder for Eldorado Co
By James Dawson Deputy

28

"We hope to have erected in a short time a Methodist and an Episcopal Church," 16 Dec. 1854 *Empire Argus* newspaper page 2.

A private school was established in 1850 by Issac Owen and the Coloma Methodist Episcopal church. The school became public in 1855.



SCHOOL NOTICE.

THE Public School in Coloma, will commence on Monday, the 9th of July. The Commissioners would inform those living out of Coloma, wishing to avail themselves of the opportunity of sending to the school, the privilege is now freely offered. Our School has been in session four months, and as far as we have ascertained entire satisfaction has been given on the part of the Instructor. Mr. Herrick is a graduate, and has had long experience in teaching both Public and Private Schools. All of the common English has been taught during the last session. Those from abroad wishing to study higher English or the classics can have the privilege.

Board can be procured at reasonable rates. Books, stationery, &c., are furnished at San Francisco prices. It is the object and aim of the Commissioners and Teacher to make this School equal to any Public or Private School in California. The course of instruction is thorough mental discipline.

Terms of Tuition—$5 per month, due monthly.

Commissioners Reference.

H. M. MILLER, REV. JAMES ROGERS,
R. CHALMERS, L. DAVIS,
G. DUDEN.

Coloma, June 30, 1855. 31 2*

Commissioners of this school included Robert Chalmers, Trustee and the Rev. James Rodgers, Coloma-Georgetown Circuit pastor.[29]

CHAPTER XXIX

EDUCATION AND RELIGION IN THE DAYS OF GOLD

FIRST SCHOOL IN PLACERVILLE—EARLY TEACHERS—EDWIN MARKHAM—RELIGION—CATHOLIC CHURCH—FEDERATED CHURCH—EPISCOPAL CHURCH—THE FIRST THEATRES

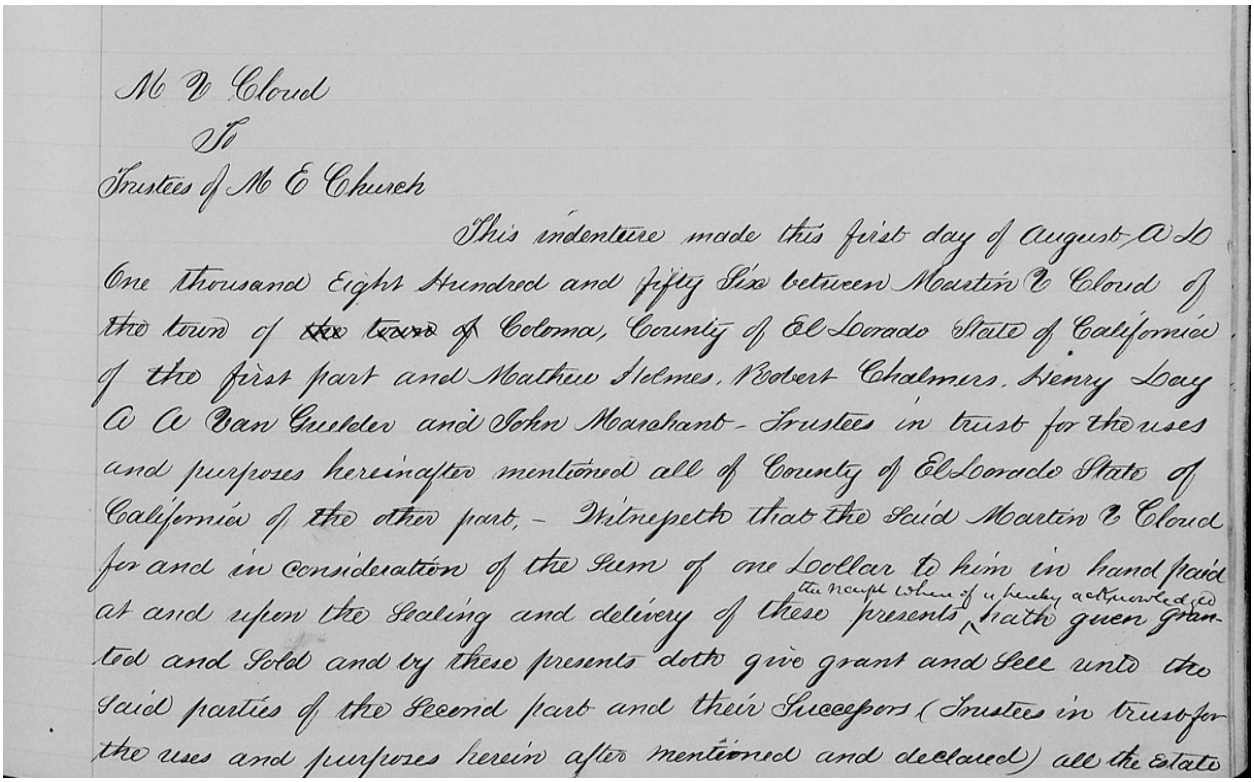
It may be surprising to know that a majority of those who came to California in the fascinating days of its early history were people of good families and in many cases were men and women of education and refinement. Consequently it was but natural that their thoughts and interests were for the education of their children in this land so far from material comforts and advantages. They were the type of people who considered education a necessity.

So it was not long before schools began to appear upon the scene. In 1850, Rev. Isaac Owen, a Methodist minister, established a Secular School in Coloma in connection with the Methodist Church. Three years later this private school was transformed into a public school with twenty pupils in attendance.

In 1863, Father Largan, a priest of the Placerville Catholic Church established a non-sectarian private school in Coloma. This school was open alike to Protestant and Catholic pupils. As the priest said—"There will be no attempt to instill into the mind of any Protestant child the principles peculiar to Catholicism, as it is in church and the home that children should receive religious training." The teacher was Miss Margaret A. Kelley, who formerly taught in the Sacramento public schools.

The 1856 deed from Martin V. Cloud to the Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church for the Methodist Parsonage describes the new location of the Methodist church as being on Sacramento Street at the intersection of the Placerville Wagon road.

It should be noted that Martin V. Cloud was one of three brothers of Elisabeth Jane Wimmer who came to Coloma in the 1850's. This deed also mentions the previously built parsonage and yet to be built church or meeting room.

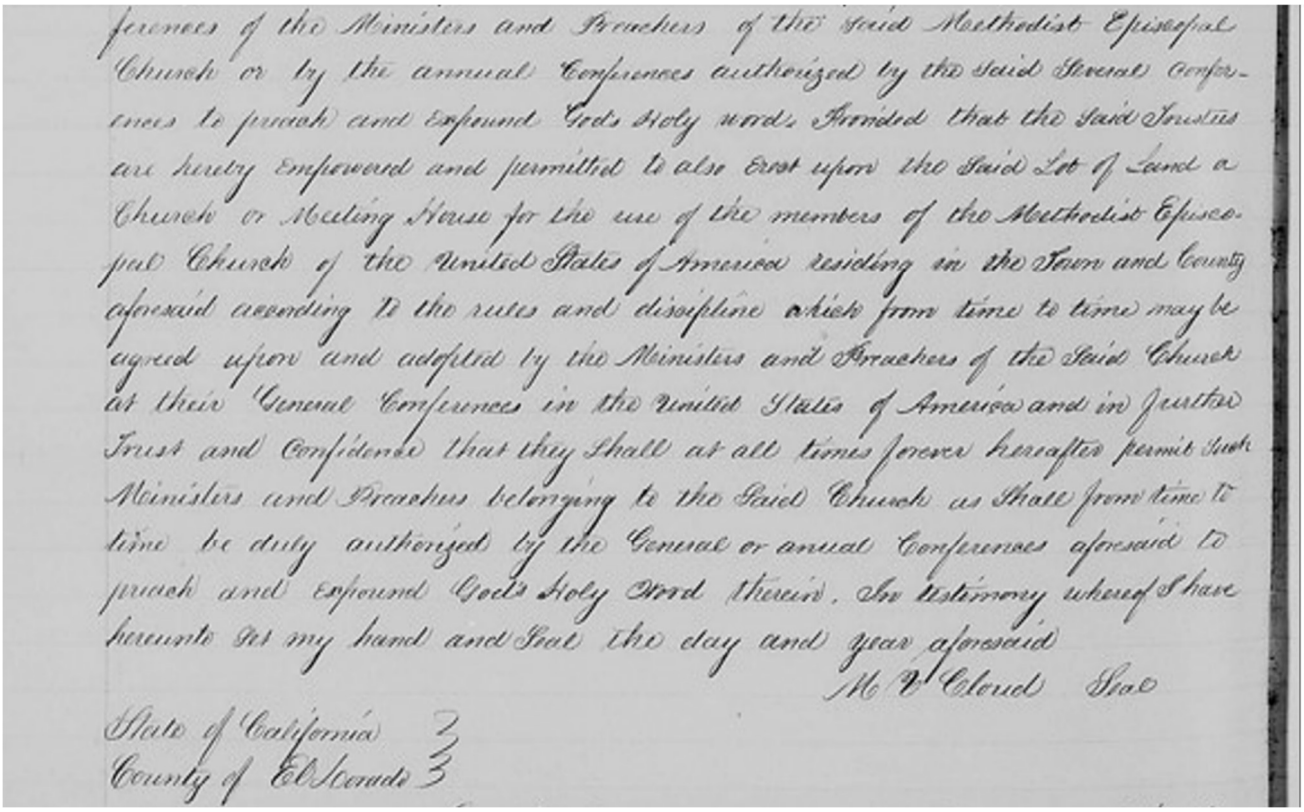


M V Cloud
To
Trustees of M E Church

This indenture made this first day of August A D One thousand Eight Hundred and fifty Six between Martin V Cloud of the town of ~~the town of~~ Coloma, County of El Dorado State of California of the first part and Mathew Holmes, Robert Chalmers, Henry Day A A Van Guelder and John Marchant - Trustees in trust for the uses and purposes hereinafter mentioned all of County of El Dorado State of California of the other part, - Witnesseth that the said Martin V Cloud for and in consideration of the sum of one Dollar to him in hand paid at and upon the Sealing and delivery of these presents (the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged) hath given Granted and Sold and by these presents doth give grant and sell unto the said parties of the Second part and their Successors (Trustees in trust for the uses and purposes herein after mentioned and declared) all the estate

31

Trustees listed are Mathew Holmes, Robert Chalmers, Henry Day, Abraham A. Van Guelder and John Marchant.



ferences of the Ministers and Preachers of the said Methodist Episcopal Church or by the annual Conferences authorized by the said General Conferences to preach and Expound Gods Holy word; Provided that the said Trustees are hereby Empowered and permitted to also Erect upon the said Lot of Land a Church or Meeting House for the use of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States of America residing in the Town and County aforesaid according to the rules and discipline which from time to time may be agreed upon and adopted by the Ministers and Preachers of the said Church at their General Conferences in the United States of America and in further Trust and Confidence that they shall at all times forever hereafter permit such Ministers and Preachers belonging to the said Church as shall from time to time be duly authorized by the General or annual Conferences aforesaid to preach and Expound Gods Holy Word therein. In testimony whereof I have hereunto Set my hand and Seal the day and year aforesaid

M V Cloud Seal

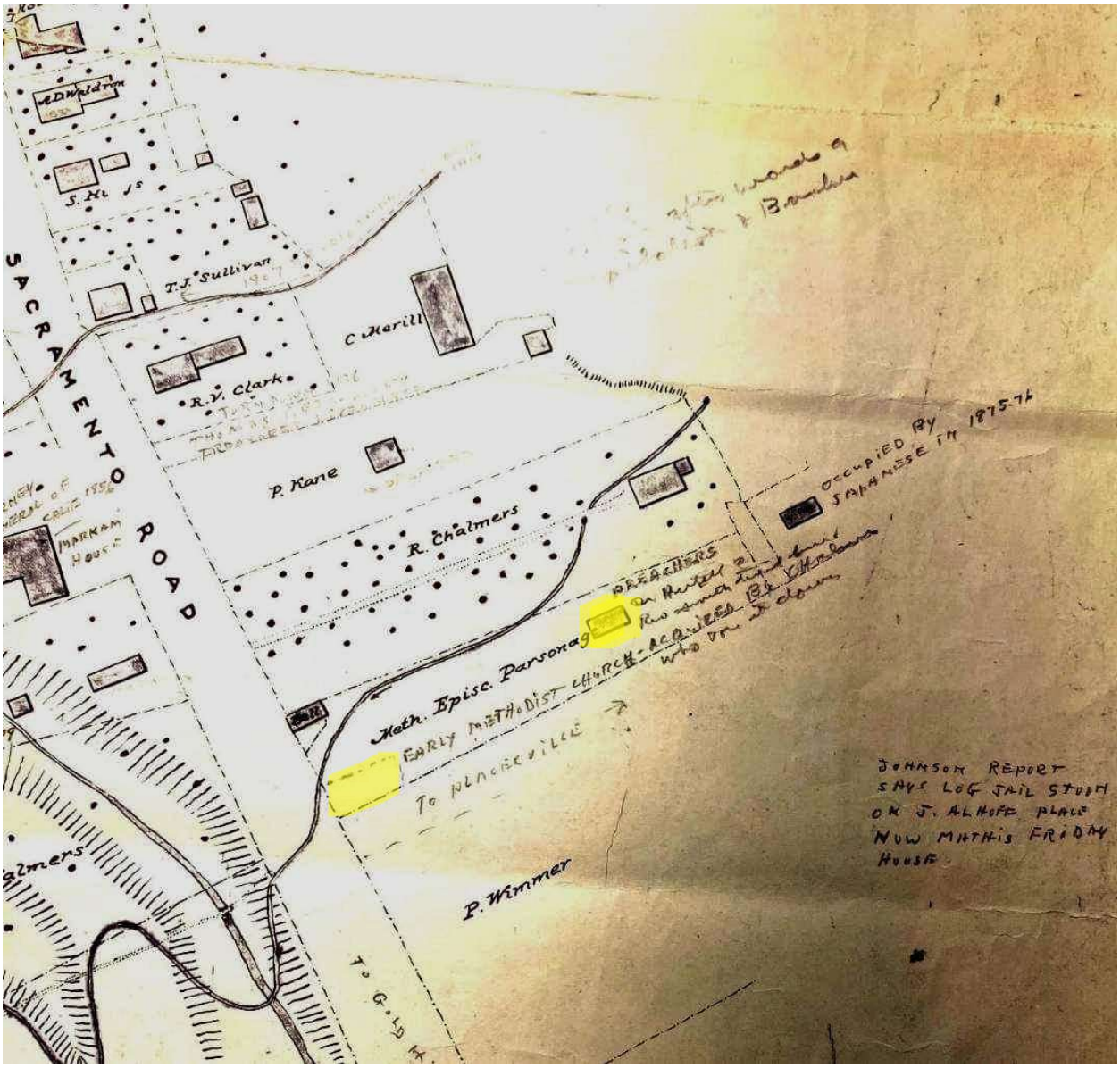
State of California }
County of El Dorado }

32

Handwritten notes on a copy of the 1857 Herman Au, Coloma map show the Methodist Church location on Sacramento Street, on the Methodist Episcopal Parsonage property. Additional notation on this map records that Chalmers acquired the property and that this building was torn down. (Source: Calif. State Parks - Notes from Ranger Sederquist's conversations with residents).

There were no deeds recorded with the El Dorado County Recorder Clerk showing Chalmers owning this property, but he did own the

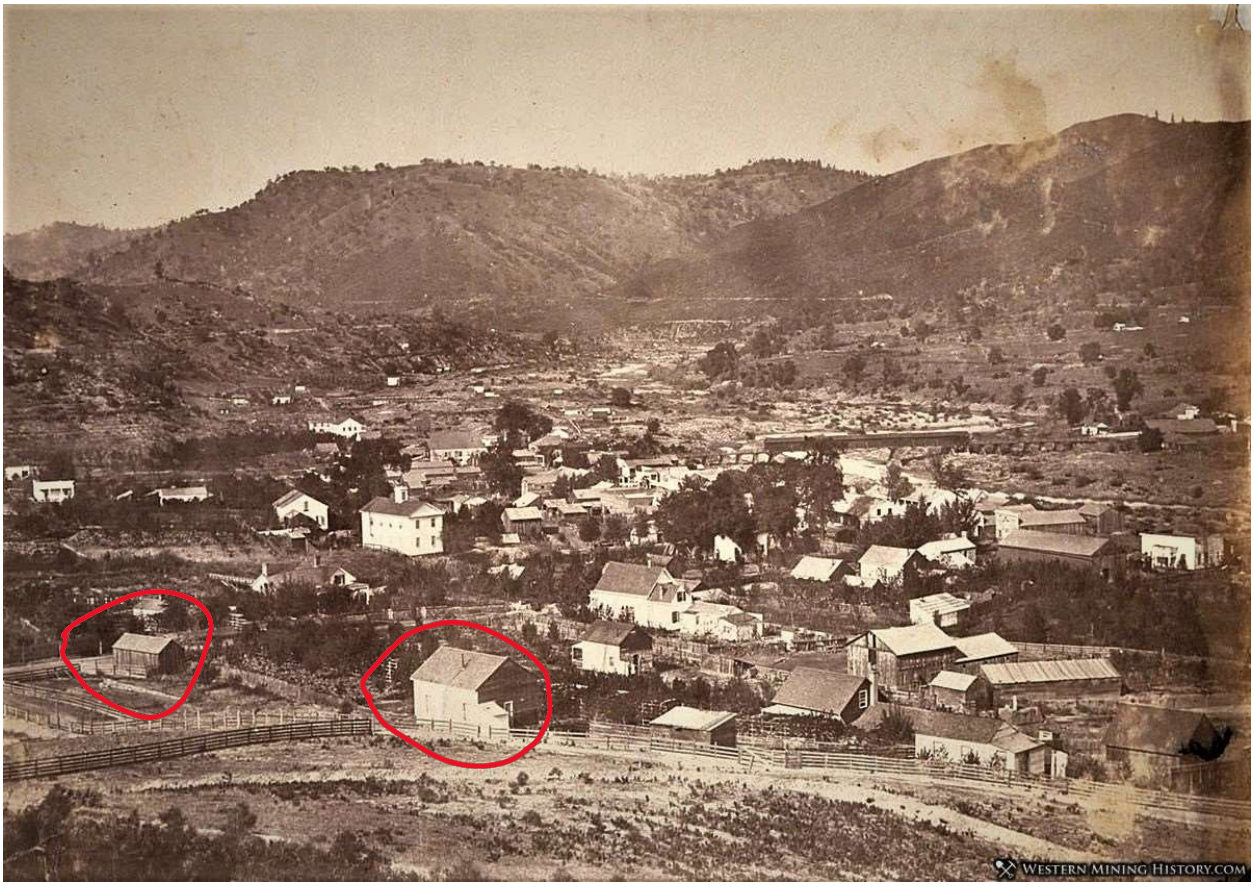
adjacent lot. He certainly could have acquired the building for demolition although no records have been located.



33

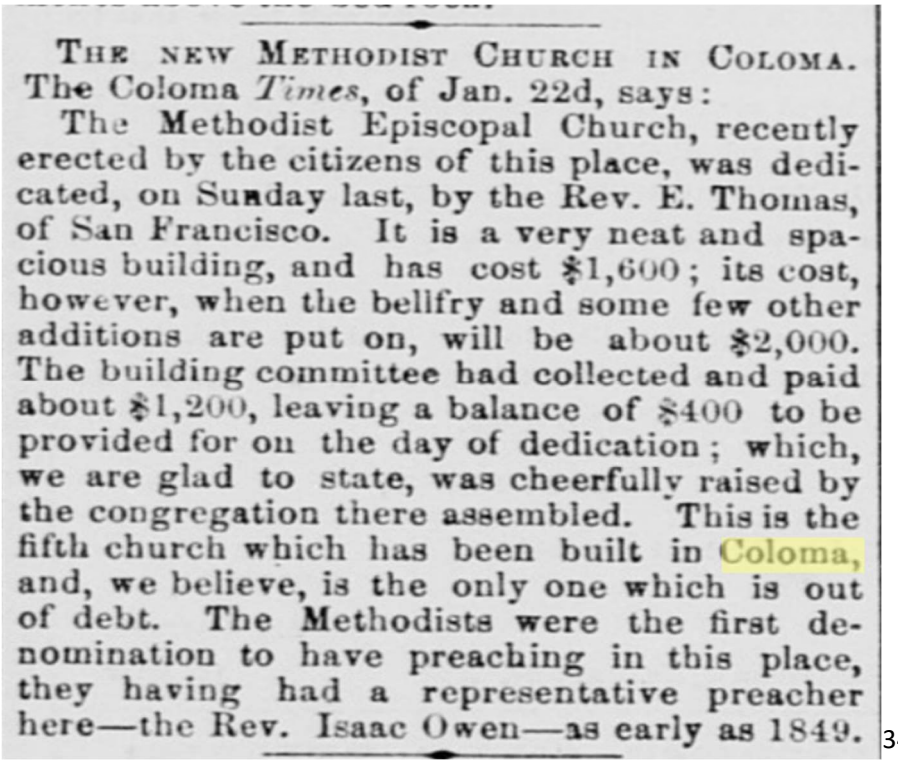
Interesting cooperation between the denominations is found in the *Mountain Democrat* issue of Feb. 21,1857 “On Feb. 22, 1857, the Rev. MacDonald of the Episcopal Church of Coloma will perform divine service in the Methodist Church of this City, tomorrow evening, at 7.”

1858 Photo of Coloma courtesy of Western Mining History and Online California Archives.



Bottom left, facing Sacramento Street is the Methodist Episcopal Church and behind it the Methodist Episcopal Parsonage. Bordered on the bottom by the Placerville Trail and Wagon Road.

What is now known as the Markham house and the I.O.O.F. hall are also visible. These landmark structures remain standing today allowing the location of the Methodist property to be placed near to the Chalmers lots.



THE NEW METHODIST CHURCH IN COLOMA.

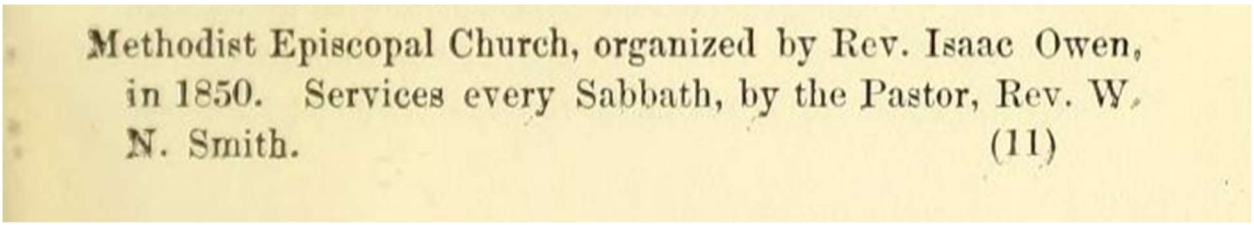
The Coloma *Times*, of Jan. 22d, says:

The Methodist Episcopal Church, recently erected by the citizens of this place, was dedicated, on Sunday last, by the Rev. E. Thomas, of San Francisco. It is a very neat and spacious building, and has cost $1,600; its cost, however, when the bellfry and some few other additions are put on, will be about $2,000. The building committee had collected and paid about $1,200, leaving a balance of $400 to be provided for on the day of dedication; which, we are glad to state, was cheerfully raised by the congregation there assembled. This is the fifth church which has been built in Coloma, and, we believe, is the only one which is out of debt. The Methodists were the first denomination to have preaching in this place, they having had a representative preacher here—the Rev. Isaac Owen—as early as 1849.[34]

Description of the new Methodist Episcopal Church

January 25, 1859

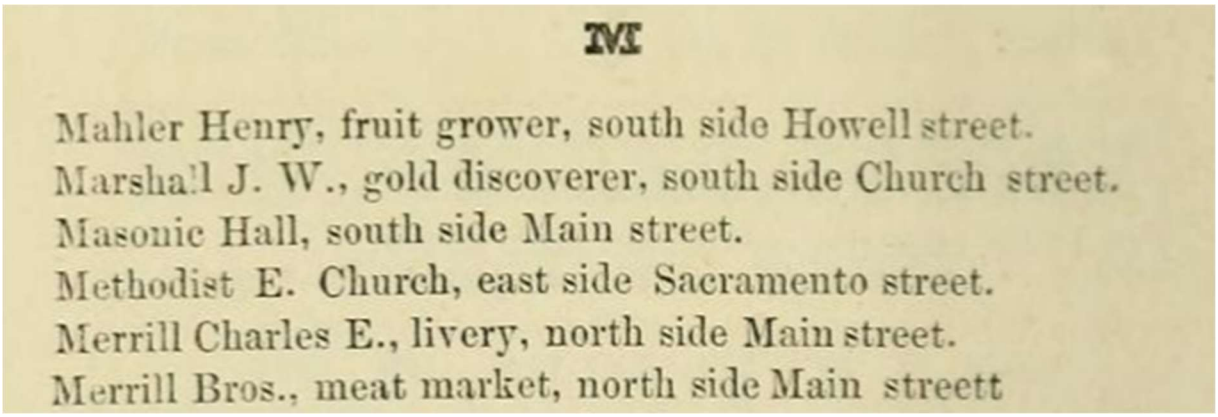
While no records show the precise date of the Methodist parsonage construction, the churches construction is in late 1858. By 1861, Wm. N. Smith, Pastor, is recorded living at the Methodist Episcopal Parsonage. Pastor Smith reported in 1861 that the church needed repairs estimated at a cost of $500.00.[35]



Methodist Episcopal Church, organized by Rev. Isaac Owen, in 1850. Services every Sabbath, by the Pastor, Rev. W. N. Smith. (11)

36

1862 Directory of the City of Placerville, Coloma section.



M

Mahler Henry, fruit grower, south side Howell street.
Marshall J. W., gold discoverer, south side Church street.
Masonic Hall, south side Main street.
Methodist E. Church, east side Sacramento street.
Merrill Charles E., livery, north side Main street.
Merrill Bros., meat market, north side Main streett

37

Methodist Episcopal Church, organized by Rev. Isaac Owen, in 1850, Services every Sabbath, by the Pastor Rev. W.N. Smith. Located on the East side of Sacramento Street.

The Methodist Episcopal Church became dilapidated in 1863, and the Methodists, like the Baptists before, held services in the I.O.O.F. Hall for some years. *Churches of El Dorado County*.[38]

Description of Church & Parsonage 1859-72 and list of pastors. Lists abandonment of second church in 1863 and the Methodists Holding service in the I.O.O.F. Hall.

1859. R. W. Williamson was retained, and under him the parsonage was improved, though a small debt remained to be paid.

1860. B. F. Meyers and Benjamin Fish served the Church.

1861. Wm. N. Smith was pastor. The church at that time was said to need repairs which would amount to $500.

1863. Benjamin Fish, pastor. As the church had become too delapidated for use, in December the congregation began holding services in the I. O. O. F. Hall. Fish served but a short time, and was succeeded by A. N. Fisher, who served two-thirds of a year.

1864. C. A. Hertal succeeded Fisher.

1865. Hertal served both Coloma and Georgetown.

1866. W. N. Smith became pastor.

1867. W. N. Smith also served.

1868. Smith was supplanted by N. R. Peck.

1869. N. R. Peck served.

1870. Peck still continued as pastor.

1871. George Larkin was chosen for this field.

1872. James Burns succeeded Larkin.

1873-'6. Martin Miller was pastor.

1876-'8. S. C. Elliott was in charge.

1879-'81. W. S. Corwin was pastor.

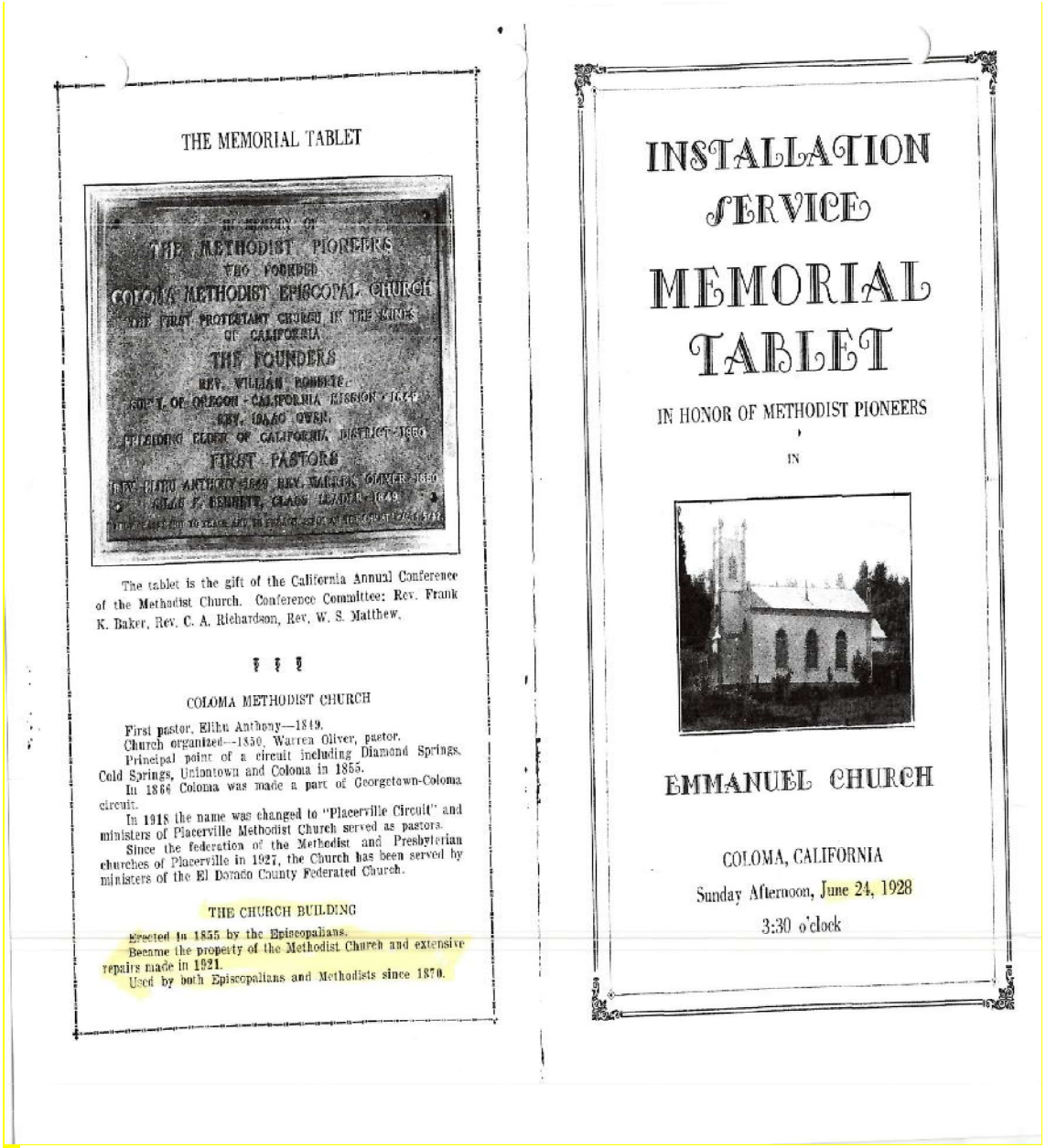
1881. J. E. Jones took charge and served till 1884, when Silas Belknap became pastor.

As Georgetown and Coloma were eventually united in one circuit, we will now give the history and succession of ministers up to 1872. From that time on the record of successions to the pulpit of the M. E. Church seems to be lacking.

39

During the 1928 dedication of the bronze Memorial Tablet placement on the Emmanuel Church the program states that both the Methodists

and Episcopalians were jointly utilizing the Emmanuel church starting sometime in 1870.



THE MEMORIAL TABLET

IN MEMORY OF
THE METHODIST PIONEERS
WHO FOUNDED
COLOMA METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
THE FIRST PROTESTANT CHURCH IN THE KING'S
OF CALIFORNIA
THE FOUNDERS
REV. WILLIAM ROBERTS
SUP'T. OF OREGON - CALIFORNIA MISSION - 1849
REV. ISAAC OWEN
PRESIDING ELDER OF CALIFORNIA DISTRICT - 1850
FIRST PASTORS
REV. ELIHU ANTHONY 1849 REV. WARREN OLIVER 1850
WILLIS T. GERRETT, CLASS LEADER - 1849

The tablet is the gift of the California Annual Conference of the Methodist Church. Conference Committee: Rev. Frank K. Baker, Rev. C. A. Richardson, Rev. W. S. Matthew.

COLOMA METHODIST CHURCH

First pastor, Elihu Anthony—1849.
Church organized—1850, Warren Oliver, pastor.
Principal point of a circuit including Diamond Springs, Cold Springs, Uniontown and Coloma in 1855.
In 1866 Coloma was made a part of Georgetown-Coloma circuit.
In 1918 the name was changed to "Placerville Circuit" and ministers of Placerville Methodist Church served as pastors.
Since the federation of the Methodist and Presbyterian churches of Placerville in 1927, the Church has been served by ministers of the El Dorado County Federated Church.

THE CHURCH BUILDING

Erected in 1855 by the Episcopalians.
Became the property of the Methodist Church and extensive repairs made in 1921.
Used by both Episcopalians and Methodists since 1870.

INSTALLATION SERVICE

MEMORIAL TABLET

IN HONOR OF METHODIST PIONEERS

IN

EMMANUEL CHURCH

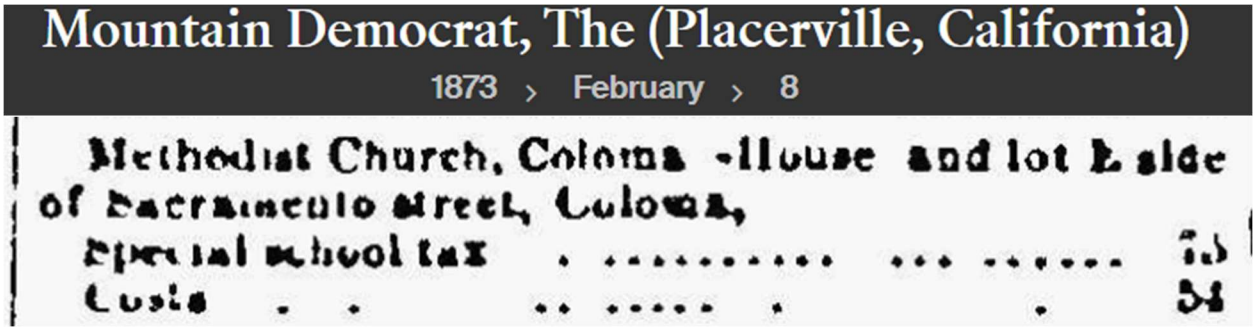
COLOMA, CALIFORNIA

Sunday Afternoon, June 24, 1928

3:30 o'clock

40

The United Methodist General Conference Commission on Archives and History listed the Methodist Church in Coloma as Number 14 in their California-Nevada Conference of sixteen historical sites. This monument is located inside the entrance to the Emmanuel Church on the left side.[1]


Mountain Democrat, The (Placerville, California)

1873 › February › 8

Methodist Church, Coloma -House and lot E side of Sacramento Street, Coloma,

Special school tax 75

Costs 34

On Feb. 8th, 1873, the Mt. Democrat lists the Methodist Episcopal Church property for lien sale due to past due taxes. The Circuit Parsonage had been transferred to Georgetown by this time.

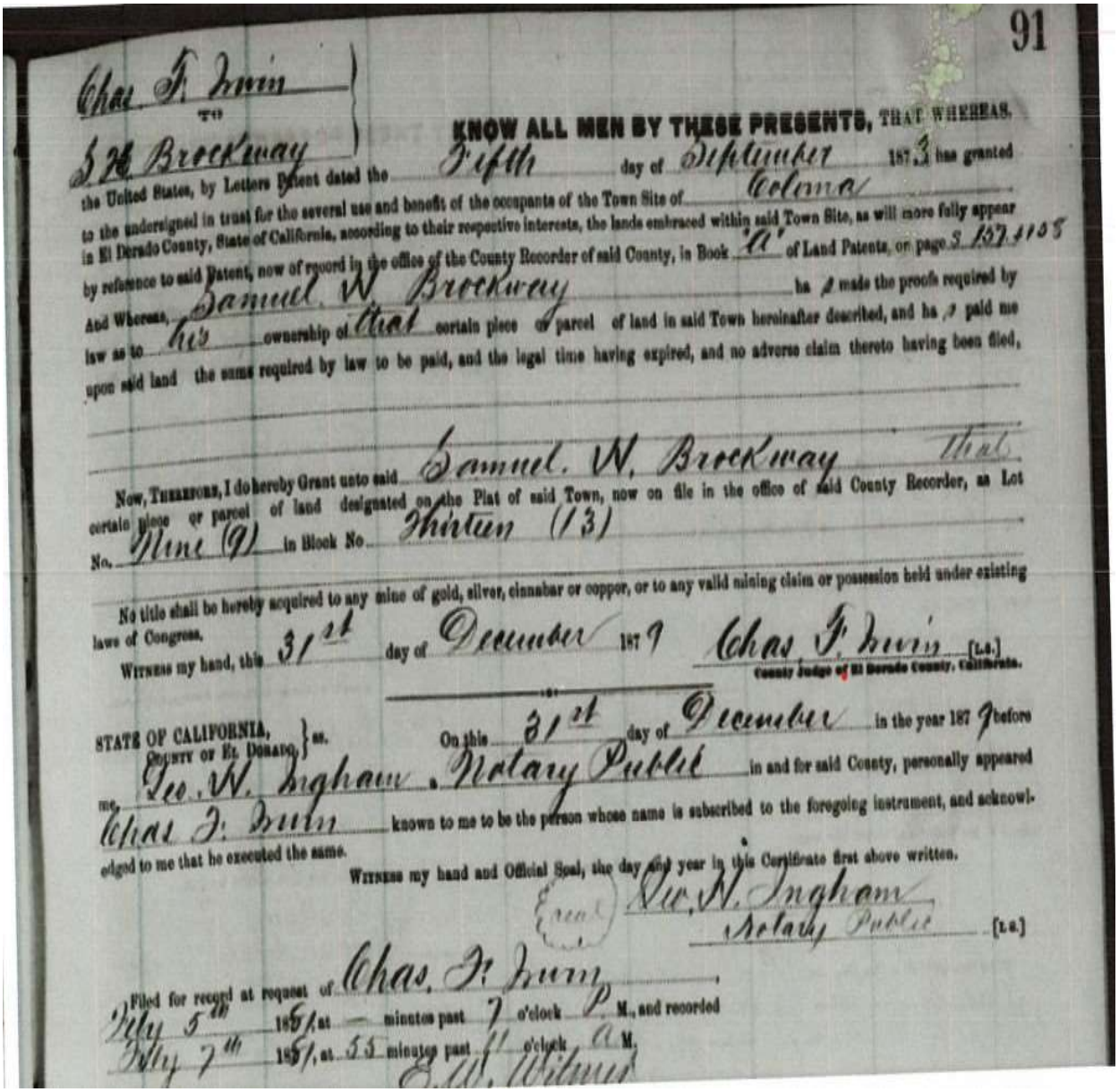
1874 Minutes of the C....pdf Info

SACRAMENTO DISTRICT.						
Sacramento, Sixth Street	38	224	1	2	12	20
" Kingsley Chapel	50	122	3	1	3	34
" Circuit	....	....	....	..	....	....
Richland	11	32	....	2	5	7
Elk Grove and Saulsbury	....	23	1	..	3	1
Placerville	9	62	1	..	6	7
Michigan Bar and Clarkesville	3	14	1	..	....	....
Georgetown and Coloma	....	22	1	..	....	....
Colfax and Iowa Hill	2	27	....	..	2	....
Auburn	2	50	...	1	3	....
Forest Hill and Michigan Bluff	....	6	....	..	2	....
Wheatland and Nicholas	12	50	....	..	3	4
Lincoln, Roseville and Penryn	8	14	....	..	....	.. .
Suisun and Fairfield	....	32	....	1	....	....
Dixon and Binghampton	....	77	2	..	4	....
Woodland and Cacheville	2	89	1	..	2	....
Dutch Flat and Gold Run	2	30	....	..	....	...
Total	139	874	11	7	45	73

The 1873 California Methodist Conference in San Francisco reports the Georgetown and Coloma circuit as having twenty-three members. The members in the circuit never exceeded thirty-one until after 1900 with the majority being in Georgetown.[1]

The Georgetown and Coloma Circuit also encompassed the churches in Jimtown, Johntown, Uniontown and Kelsey. The Methodist Episcopal Conference policy was to rotate pastors every three years. The Bishop George Miller, wrote about his father being a Methodist pastor while living in Coloma and then Uniontown from 1873 to 1876 in his book "Growing Up".[2]

Upon completion of the official town survey, the Methodist Episcopal Church and parsonage lot were designated as Lot 9, Block 13. It was described as having seventy-five feet facing Sacramento Street and 350’ on each side ending in a fifty feet wide boundary line at the rear of the lot toward Placerville. Modern maps show the consolidation with the adjacent lot owned by Thomas. The church itself had ceased to be in use since 1870 as the Methodists were jointly using the Emmanuel church.



91

Chas. F. Irwin
to
S. W. Brockway

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, THAT WHEREAS,

the United States, by Letters Patent dated the Fifth day of September 187 3 has granted to the undersigned in trust for the several use and benefit of the occupants of the Town Site of Coloma in El Dorado County, State of California, according to their respective interests, the lands embraced within said Town Site, as will more fully appear by reference to said Patent, now of record in the office of the County Recorder of said County, in Book A of Land Patents, on page 3 157 & 158

And Whereas, Samuel W. Brockway has made the proofs required by law as to his ownership of that certain piece or parcel of land in said Town hereinafter described, and has paid me upon said land the sums required by law to be paid, and the legal time having expired, and no adverse claim thereto having been filed,

Now, Therefore, I do hereby Grant unto said Samuel W. Brockway that certain piece or parcel of land designated on the Plat of said Town, now on file in the office of said County Recorder, as Lot No. Nine (9) in Block No. Thirteen (13)

No title shall be hereby acquired to any mine of gold, silver, cinnabar or copper, or to any valid mining claim or possession held under existing laws of Congress.

Witness my hand, this 31st day of December 187 9 Chas F. Irwin [L.S.]
County Judge of El Dorado County, California.

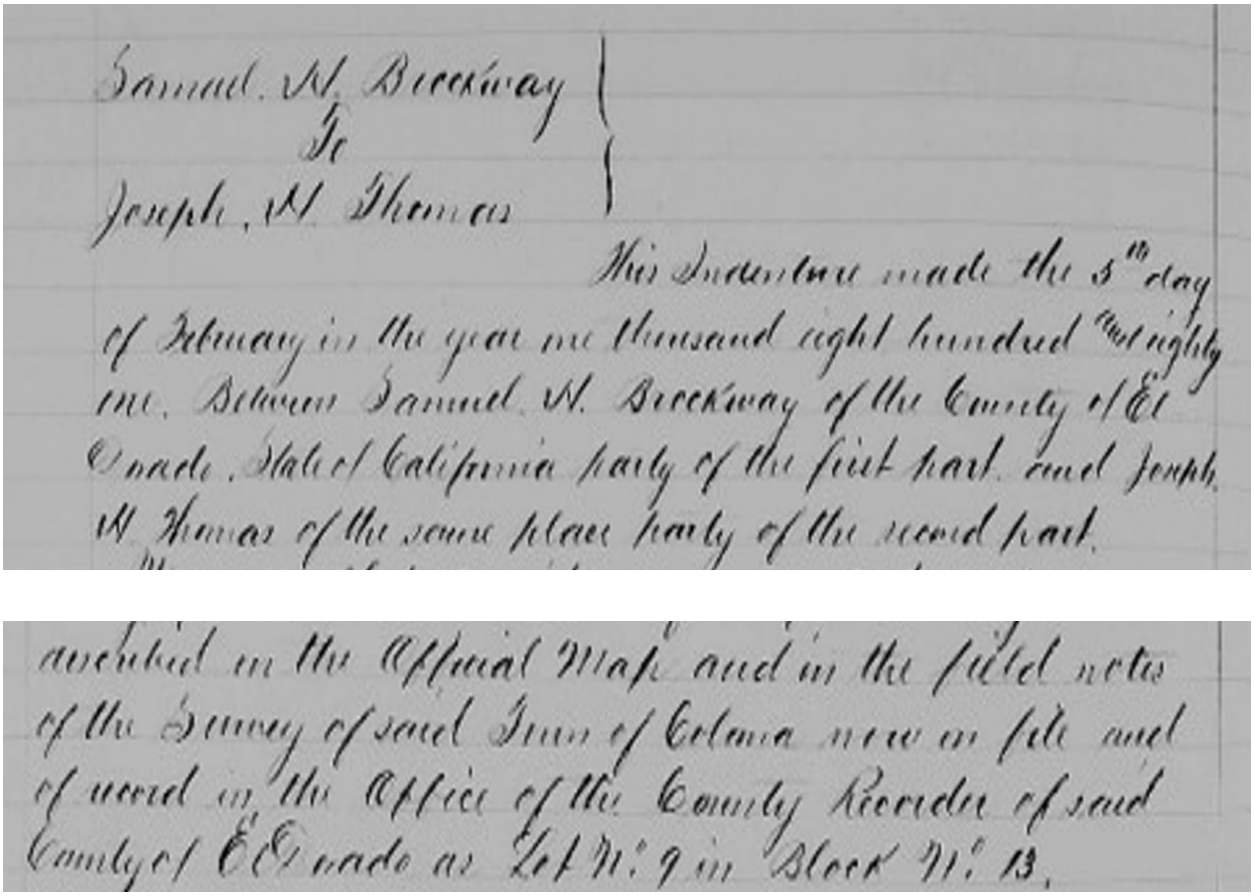
STATE OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF EL DORADO, } ss. On this 31st day of December in the year 187 9 before me, Geo. W. Ingham a Notary Public in and for said County, personally appeared Chas F. Irwin known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument, and acknowledged to me that he executed the same.

Witness my hand and Official Seal, the day and year in this Certificate first above written.

Geo. W. Ingham
Notary Public [L.S.]

Filed for record at request of Chas. F. Irwin,
July 5th 1881 at — minutes past 7 o'clock P. M., and recorded
July 7th 1881 at 55 minutes past 11 o'clock A. M.
E. W. Witmer

In 1879 Sam Brockway purchased the old Methodist Church property at a lien sale from El Dorado County.[3]



Samuel N. Brockway
To
Joseph N. Thomas

This Indenture made the 5th day of February in the year one thousand eight hundred and eighty one. Between Samuel N. Brockway of the County of El Dorado, State of California party of the first part, and Joseph N. Thomas of the same place party of the second part.

described in the Official Map and in the field notes of the Survey of said Town of Coloma now on file and of record in the Office of the County Recorder of said County of El Dorado as Lot No. 9 in Block No. 13.

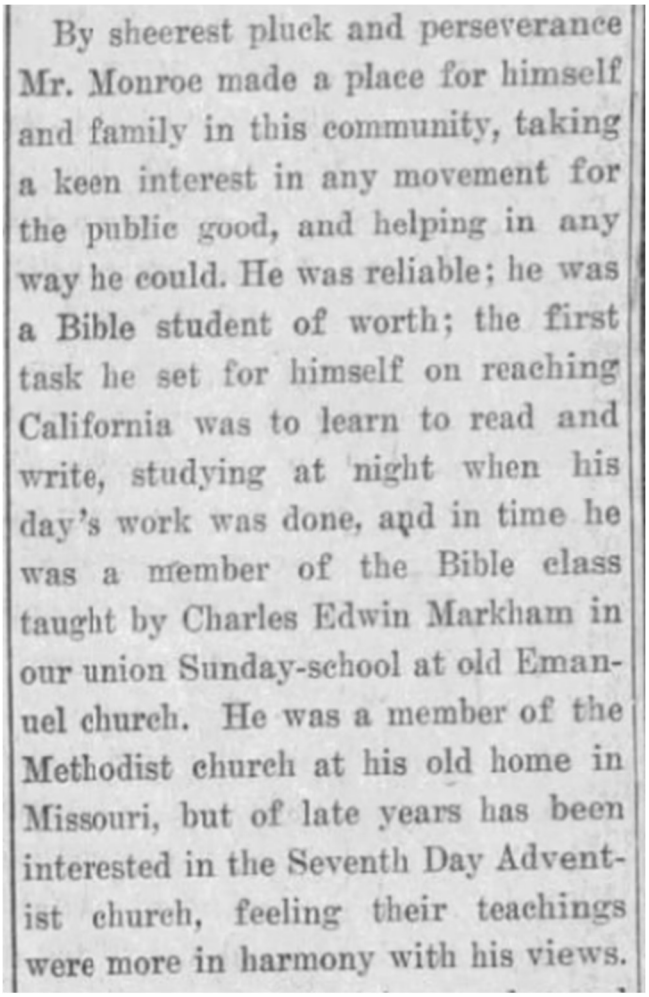
4

On Feb. 5, 1881, Sam Brockway sells the old Methodist Episcopal Church and Parsonage lot to Joe Thomas.

Successive sales of the property have been recorded with the most recent purchase by Mr. Douglas Hus. He started construction of a new home on the old Methodist church and parsonage property in early 2023.

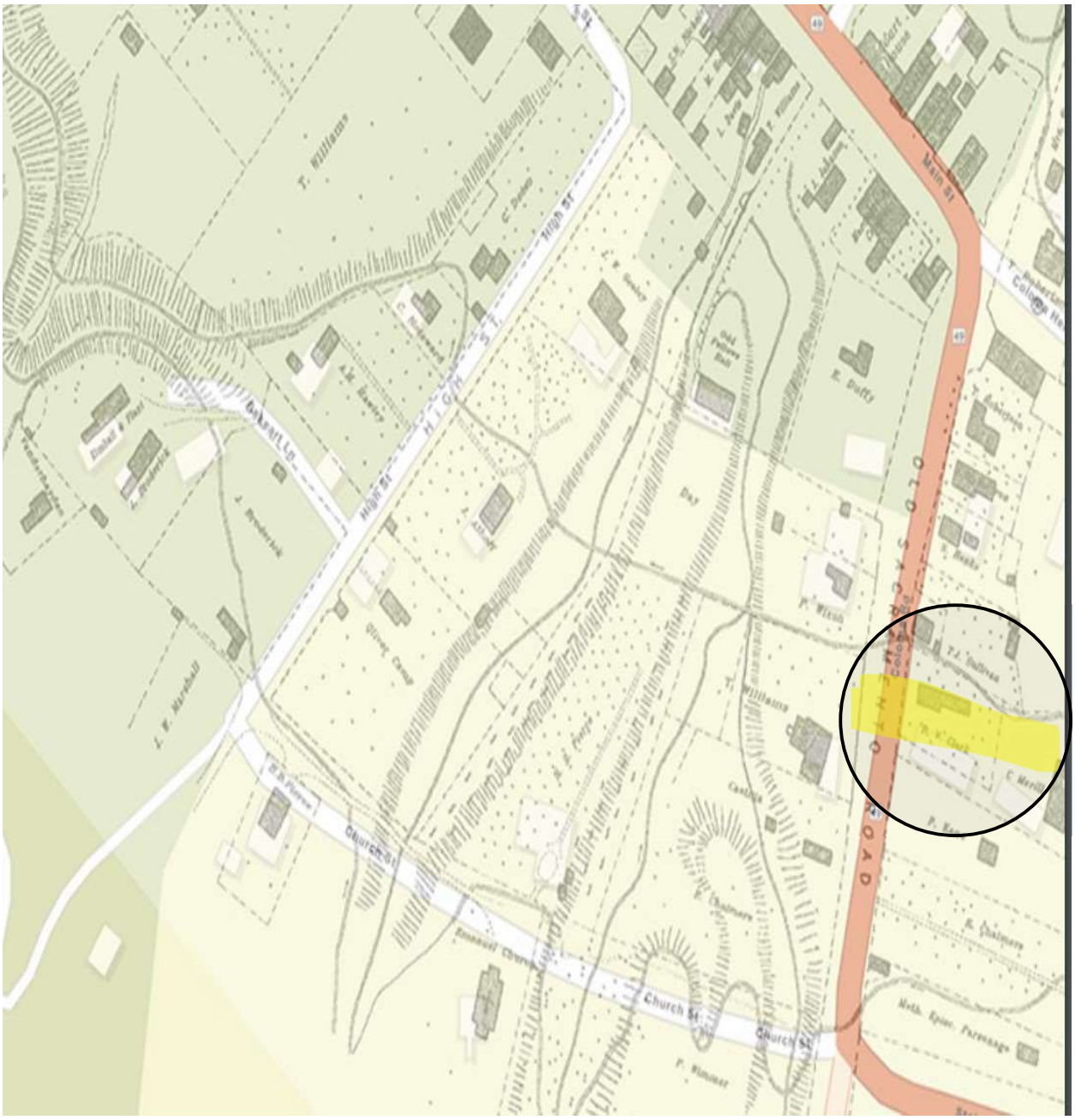
The famous poet Edwin Markam came to Coloma in 1882 as a public-school teacher. During his time in Coloma, his friendship with James Marshall, a trustee for the Coloma Methodist Church, and A. J Nelson, the presiding Elder for the El Dorado County circuit, renewed his interest in becoming a minister. Shortly after moving to Placerville

Edwin Markham became a licensed Methodist preacher. There is no record of Markham having performed a church service in Coloma.[5] Edwin did, however, teach Sunday school in Coloma as referenced in the obituary of Andrew Monroe.[6]



By sheerest pluck and perseverance Mr. Monroe made a place for himself and family in this community, taking a keen interest in any movement for the public good, and helping in any way he could. He was reliable; he was a Bible student of worth; the first task he set for himself on reaching California was to learn to read and write, studying at night when his day's work was done, and in time he was a member of the Bible class taught by Charles Edwin Markham in our union Sunday-school at old Emanuel church. He was a member of the Methodist church at his old home in Missouri, but of late years has been interested in the Seventh Day Adventist church, feeling their teachings were more in harmony with his views.

In March of 1921, a public meeting was held to discuss the transfer of the Emmanuel Episcopal Church and the lot upon which it sat to the Methodist Episcopal Church. This meeting and the subsequent transfers of the Emmanuel Episcopal Church and lot to the Methodist Episcopal Church is thoroughly documented in the following Emmanuel Episcopal Church chapter.



Map overlay 1857 to a 2022 Google GIS Map showing the Methodist Episcopal Church and Parsonage location prior to 1870

Chapter 3

Emmanuel Episcopal Church

1856 - 1921

Emmanuel Methodist Episcopal Church

1921 - 1969

Emmanuel Episcopal Church Timeline

1855

- Bishop Kip along with Jenny Wimmer and others meet prospective parishioners in Coloma.
- Bishop Kip preaches the first Episcopal Sermon in the Court House and baptized the first child in Coloma.
- Emmanuel Episcopal church is erected.
- Purchase of the main church lot from the Nichols family.

1856

- Reverend James Capen arrives in Coloma and stayed only a few months before being replaced by the Reverend D. F. MacDonald. Bishop Kip visits Coloma and the newly completed church.
- Reverend MacDonald published book of sermons to raise money for the Emmanuel church.

1857

- An extension of the Emmanuel Episcopal church lot is sold by the Wimmer family to Emmanuel Episcopal Church for $50.00.
- Reverend MacDonald is reassigned to Stockton Circuit leaving the Emmanuel Episcopal church without a pastor.

1858

- The Vestry of the Emmanuel church votes to sell the Emmanuel church. The cost of construction was $7000.00.

- Rev. MacDonald published the book “Moral Law” with proceeds to go towards Emmanuels debt.

1859

- The Vestry of the Emmanuel church reports that Bishop Kip has arranged to pay off the remaining construction debt of the Emmanuel church.

1861

- Reverend C.C. Peirce arrives in Placerville and preaches in Coloma and twenty other locations.

1870

- Methodist Episcopal church is sharing use of the Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Coloma with the Rev. Peirce and the Episcopal Church after abandoning the use of the Coloma I.O.O.F. Hall.

1873

- Emmanuel Episcopal Church is listed on the lien sale list for past due taxes by El Dorado County.
- Emmanuel Episcopal church is shown on an official survey map on property belonging to Robert Chalmers.

1881

- Robert Chalmers dies, and many of his properties are repossessed by the Stockton Building and Loan Association.

1890

- The Stockton Building and Loan Association sells the Chalmers properties to Oscar Osborn.

1901

- Albert Norris purchases the Oscar Osborn property.

1903

- Reverend Peirce dies after over forty years of service to El Dorado County Episcopal Churches including Coloma.

1904

- Native Sons of the Golden West attempt to refurbish the Emmanuel church.

1921

- The Norris family deeds the Emmanuel Episcopal Church lot to the Methodist Episcopal church.
- Bishop Moreland of the Episcopal Church diocese of Sacramento deeds the Emmanuel Episcopal Church building to the Methodist Episcopal Church with stipulations.
- Emmanuel Episcopal Church name is changed to the Emmanuel Methodist Episcopal Church.

1923

- Bishop Moreland holds service in Coloma to mark the annual pilgrimage to the Emmanuel in memory of the founding pioneers.

1928

- Methodist Episcopal Church installs a memorial tablet honoring the shared use of the Emmanuel church from 1870 till 1928.

1939

- Memorial table is installed honoring Reverend C. C. Pierce for his forty plus years of service to the Emmanuel Church (1861-1903).

1969

- Emmanuel Methodist Church is donated to the State of California.

Partial list of Episcopal church clergy that officiated at the Emmanuel Church in Coloma.

Bishop Kip, 1855-56
Reverend Capen, 1856
Reverend MacDonald, 1856 - 1857
Reverend Peirce, 1861 – 1903
Bishop J. H. D. Wingfield, prior to 1903 probable, but not well documented
Bishop Moreland, 1921 and 1923
Archdeacon Barr Lee, 1919 and 1921[1]

Emmanuel Episcopal Church 1856 - 1921

Emmanuel Methodist Episcopal Church 1921 – 1969

2

"We hope to have erected in a short time a Methodist and Episcopal church." Empire Argus *December 16, 1854,* [3]

"A plan was taken to erect a Church, subscriptions commenced, a plan had been adopted and the building commenced." Bishop Kip.[4]

Bishop Kip[5]

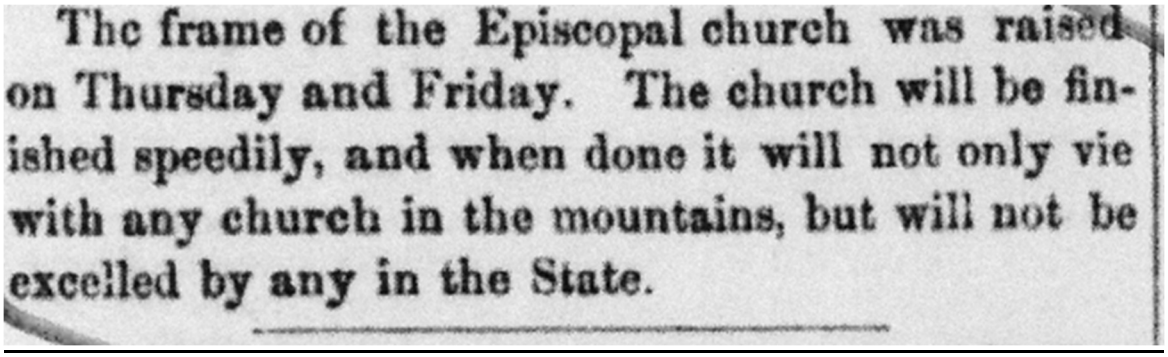
In January 1855 Bishop Kip met with Jenny Wimmer and others, being escorted by Mr. George Searle around the town meeting perspective parishioners. The Wednesday of his visit, the 24th of January the Bishop Kip Preached in the Coloma Court House and baptized an infant.[6]

A new stone Jail is soon to go up in the place for the better accommonation of those in El Dorado County, who are disposed to be too rapidly advancing on the Young America principles. The convicts of the present jail, are daily engaged in quarrying and preparing stone for its speedy erection. Although this is favorable in point of Law, and in the maintainance of order, yet in the erection of a new Episcopal Church now under contract in Coloma, we imagine we see more favorable auspices for that place than we could in the erection of a *dozen Prisons*. Throwing aside all levity it will indeed be an honor to the place, and if properly apreciated, will prove a safeguard to the interests of her Citizens. We were informed by Mr. Geo. Searles, an enterprising Citizen of that place, and under whose instructsons the Church is to be built, that it is to be of the Gothic style—upon the floor it will measure 60 by 30 feet—is to be 20 feet high with an appropriate tower in front. It is to have an Orchestra Gallery neatly filled up for the accommodation of the Orchestra and singers—In short the Church is to be finished off in a style inferior to none in the mountains. Coloma has already set an example to other towns in the mountains, by a strict observance of her Sabbaths, and we sincerely hope that Georgetown, with many others, may soon follow so wholesome a precedent.

7

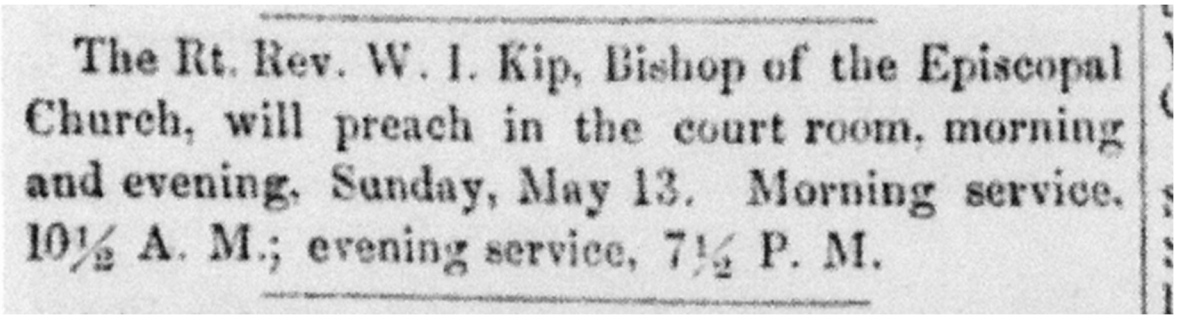
In the February 22, 1855, issue of the Georgetown News reports on the progress of the new County Jail and the Emmanuel Church. Hinting that a few more churches would be better than another jail. This is the first time the size of the Emmanuel Church and its interior was described in the local newspapers.

The church does have quarried stones that match the jail in its foundation. To date there is no definitive evidence of when they were placed. It is quite possible that they are original to the foundation and placed by the early jail inmates.


The frame of the Episcopal church was raised on Thursday and Friday. The church will be finished speedily, and when done it will not only vie with any church in the mountains, but will not be excelled by any in the State.

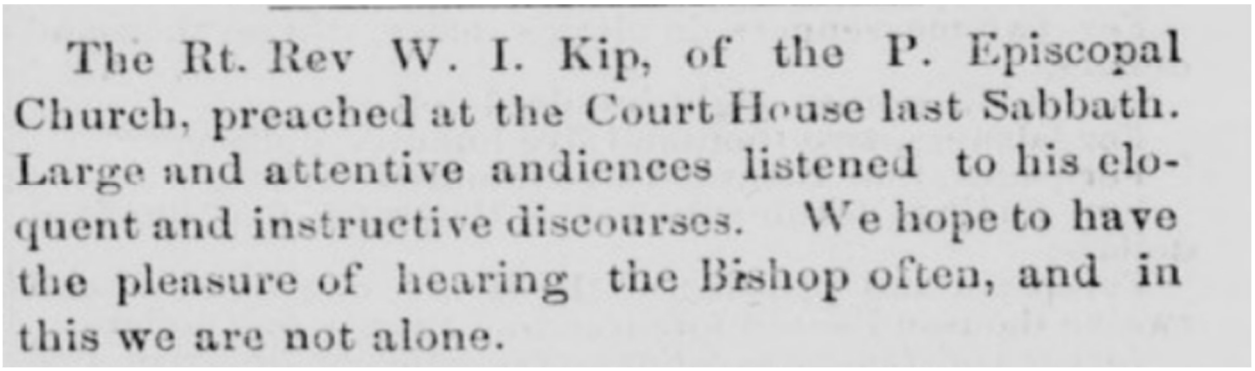
[8] March 24, 1855

"Kip's visit to Coloma as an Episcopal priest was another first for the area. "Now and then, some wandering Methodists came, but they were generally so illiterate that the congregation could not listen to them with patience," he wrote. He found interested members of his denomination who immediately took up a subscription to build a church." Judith Robinson (great granddaughter of the Rev. Kip), *Gold Rush to Millennium.*[9]



The Rt. Rev. W. I. Kip, Bishop of the Episcopal Church, will preach in the court room, morning and evening, Sunday, May 13. Morning service, 10½ A. M.; evening service, 7½ P. M.

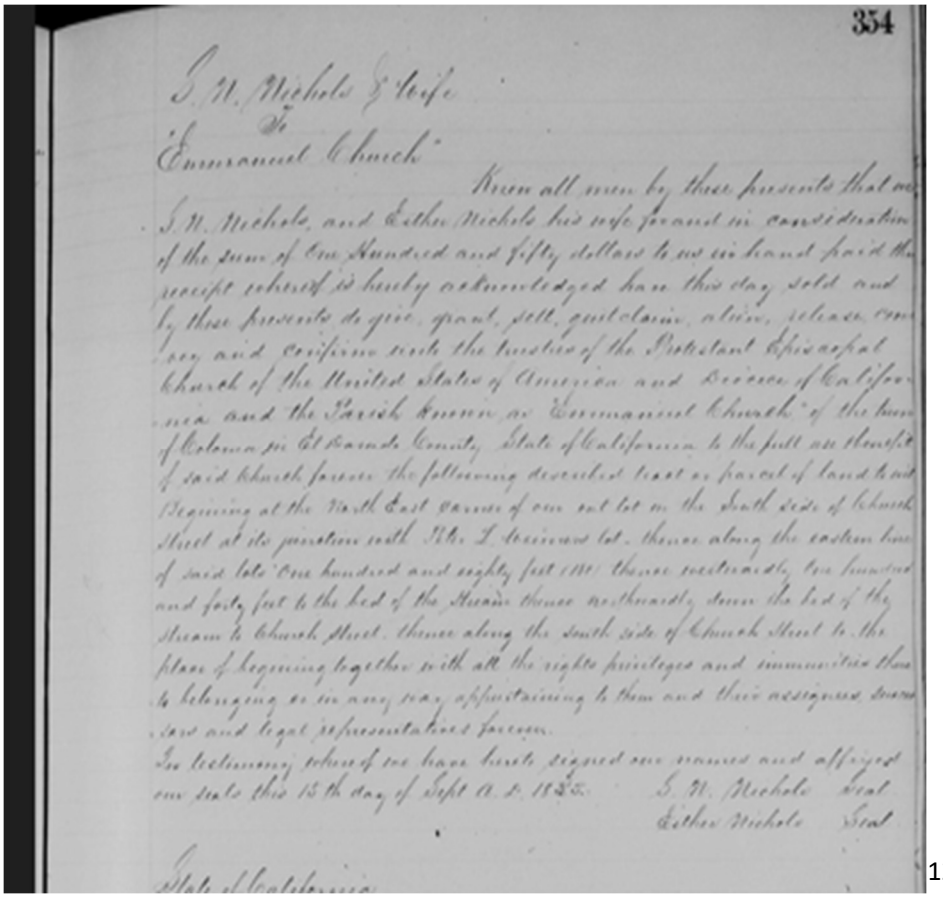
[10] May 12th, 1855



The Rt. Rev W. I. Kip, of the P. Episcopal Church, preached at the Court House last Sabbath. Large and attentive andiences listened to his eloquent and instructive discourses. We hope to have the pleasure of hearing the Bishop often, and in this we are not alone.

[11]May 17, 1855

The *Empire Argus* reported on the construction and funding of the Emmanuel Episcopal Church during the year 1855.



354

S. H. Nichols & Wife
To
Emmanuel Church

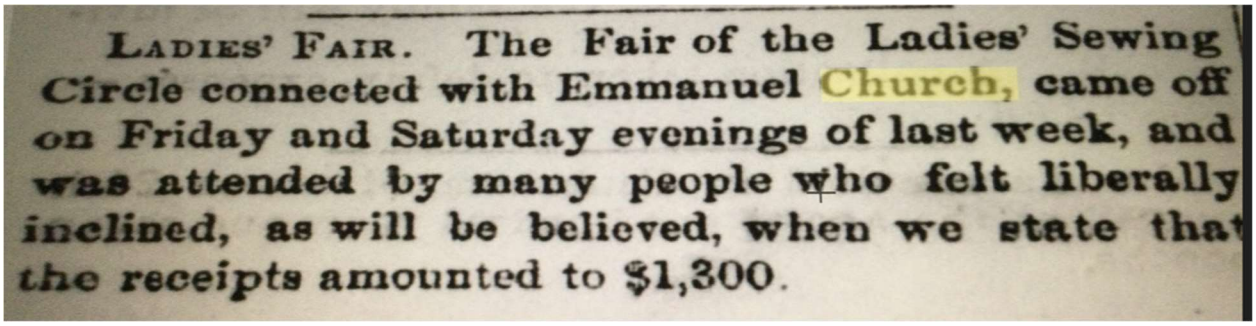
Know all men by these presents that we S. H. Nichols and Esther Nichols his wife parties in consideration of the sum of One Hundred and fifty dollars to us in hand paid the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged have this day sold and by these presents do give, grant, sell, quitclaim, alien, release convey and confirm unto the trustees of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America and Diocese of California and the Parish known as Emmanuel Church of the town of Coloma in El Dorado County, State of California to the full use and benefit of said Church forever the following described tract or parcel of land to wit Beginning at the North East corner of our lot on the South side of Church Street at its junction with Mr. L. Sweeneys lot. thence along the eastern line of said lot One hundred and eighty feet (180) thence westwardly two hundred and forty feet to the bed of the Stream thence northwardly down the bed of the stream to Church Street. thence along the South side of Church Street to the place of beginning together with all the rights privileges and immunities thereto belonging or in any way appertaining to them and their assignees successors and legal representatives forever.

In testimony whereof we have hereto signed our names and affixed our seals this 13 th day of Sept A. D. 1855. S. H. Nichols Seal
Esther Nichols Seal

State of California

12

September 1855, the first Deed for the Emmanuel Church lot, purchased for the sum of $150.00 from Stephen and Ester Nichols, owners of the Nichols Hotel. This lot measured 180’ x 140’.



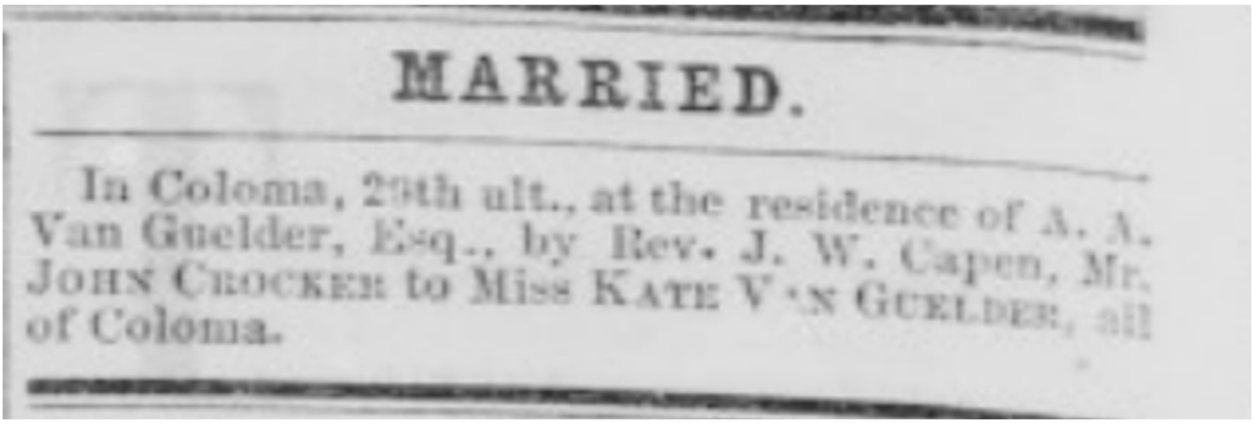
LADIES' FAIR. The Fair of the Ladies' Sewing Circle connected with Emmanuel Church, came off on Friday and Saturday evenings of last week, and was attended by many people who felt liberally inclined, as will be believed, when we state that the receipts amounted to $1,300.

13

Fundraising was taken on by many groups during the construction of the church.

October 13, 1855

"Between the completion of the Emmanuel in June of 1855 and January 1856, the first minister arrived in Coloma, Revered James Capen, a missionary and former Baptist Minister. Reverend Capen only stayed a few months until returning to Oakland."[14]

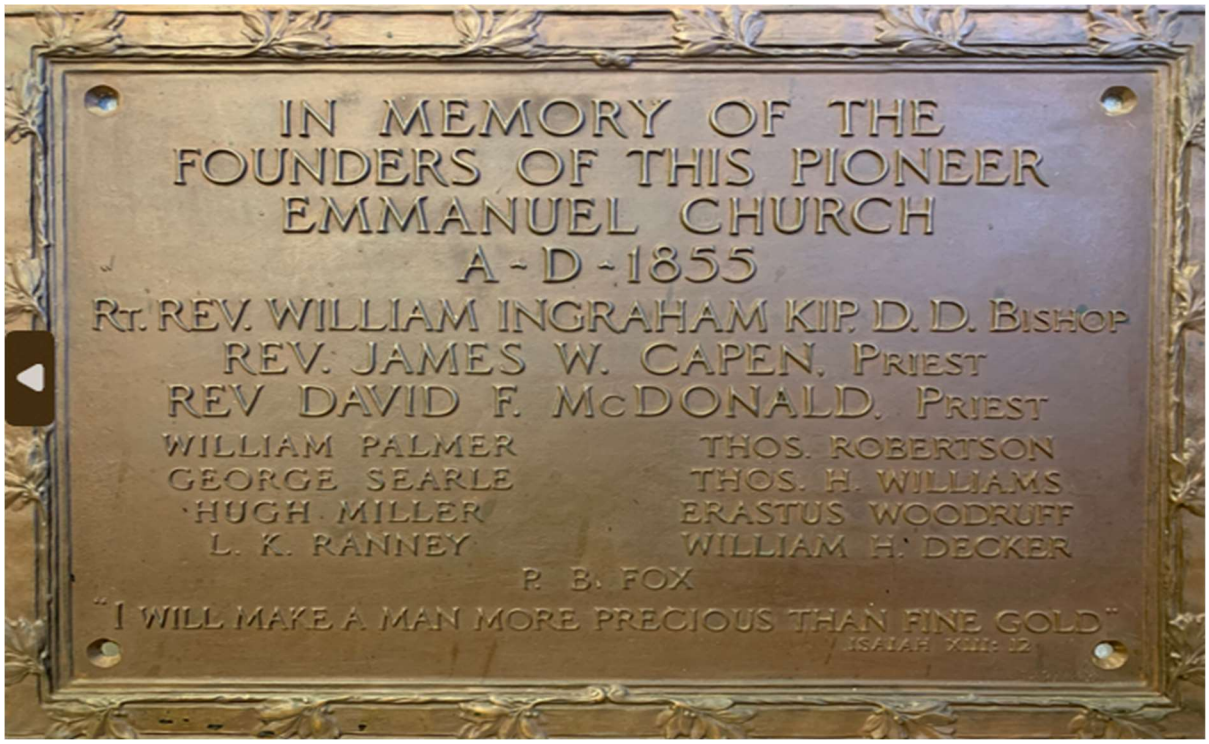


MARRIED.

In Coloma, 29th ult., at the residence of A. A. Van Guelder, Esq., by Rev. J. W. Capen, Mr. JOHN CROCKER to Miss KATE V'N GUELDER, all of Coloma.

15

Although Rev. Capen was only in Coloma for a few months, he did perform the marriage of John Crocker to Kate Van Guelder in May of 1856. This was the first recorded Episcopal marriage in Coloma.

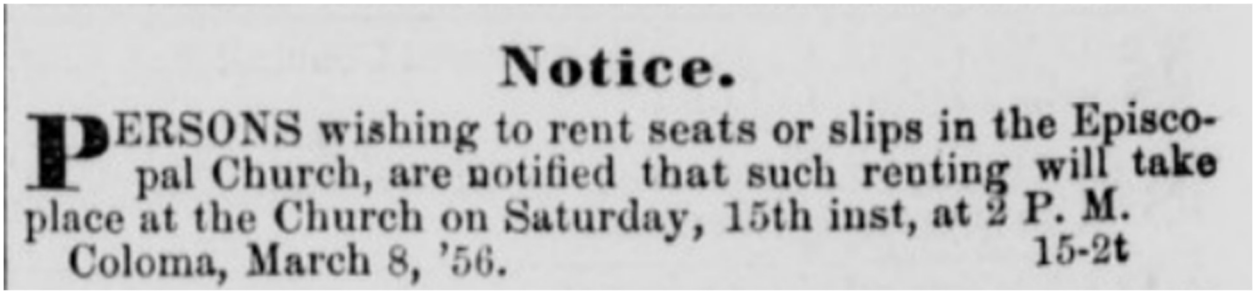


"Reverend D.F. MacDonald soon arrived and stayed for more than a year, until 1859 when sent to Stockton leaving the Placerville/Coloma parish without a Reverend".[16]

"May 11, 1856, the first object which greeting my sight as we entered town, was the little Church that had been built since my last visit". Bishop Kip, *Early Days of My Episcopate*.[17]

Modern photo of Emmanuel Church taken from Cold Springs Rd. known as Sacramento Road in the 1850's.[18]

On Nov. 6, 1856, there was held a Special (Convocation) Convention of the California Missionary Episcopal Diocese of California in San Francisco. Those attending from the Coloma Emmanuel Church were George Searle, P. B. Fox, and H.W. Miller, all Coloma residents.



Notice.

PERSONS wishing to rent seats or slips in the Episcopal Church, are notified that such renting will take place at the Church on Saturday, 15th inst, at 2 P. M.

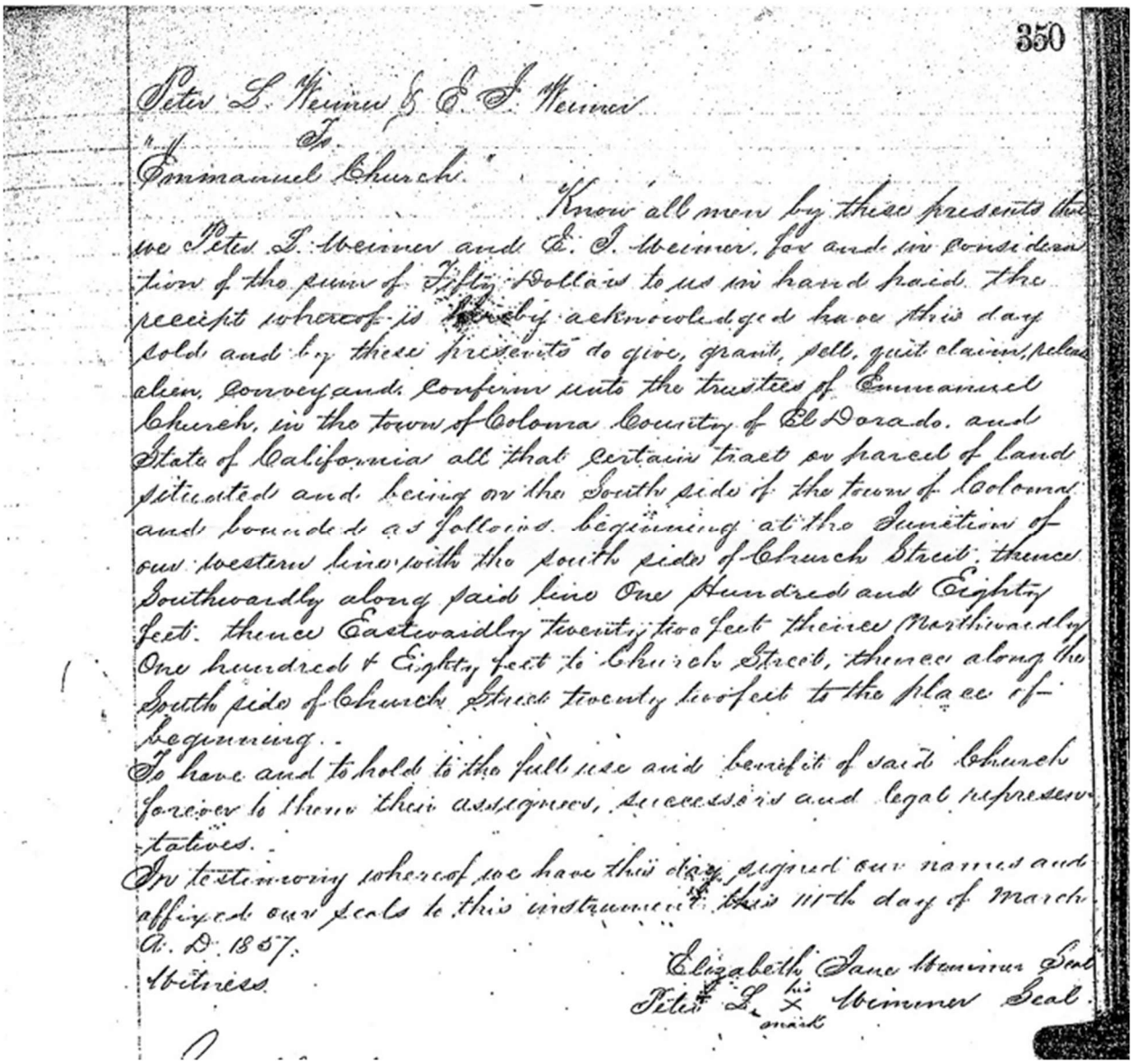
Coloma, March 8, '56. 15-2t

19

As part of the fundraising efforts to retire the construction debt of the Emmanuel church was rental of seats or an entire pew. No records of this rental being successful have been located.

There was a cooperation between the Methodist Church and the Emmanuel Episcopal Church as reported in the Mt. Democrat, February 21,1857. *"The Rev. MacDonald of the Episcopal Church of Coloma will perform divine service in the Methodist Church of this City, tomorrow evening, at 7"*.

On March 14, 1857, a portion, or an extension to the lot upon which the Emmanuel church was constructed is officially sold by the Wimmers to the Emmanuel Church for the sum of $50.00. The addition of this 180' X 22' section can only be speculated as if this addition were to widen the lot, a lot line adjustment or for some other reason. Hopefully, new documents will surface that address this issue.



350

Peter L. Weimer & E. J. Weimer

To

Emmanuel Church.

Know all men by these presents that we Peter L. Weimer and E. J. Weimer, for and in consideration of the sum of Fifty Dollars to us in hand paid, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged have this day sold and by these presents do give, grant, sell, quit claim, release, convey and confirm unto the trustees of Emmanuel Church, in the town of Coloma County of El Dorado, and State of California all that certain tract or parcel of land situated and being on the South side of the town of Coloma and bounded as follows. beginning at the Junction of our western line with the south side of Church Street: thence Southwardly along said line One Hundred and Eighty feet: thence Eastwardly twenty two feet thence Northwardly One hundred & Eighty feet to Church Street, thence along the South side of Church Street twenty two feet to the place of beginning.

To have and to hold to the full use and benefit of said Church forever to them their assignees, successors and legal representatives.

In testimony whereof we have this day signed our names and affixed our seals to this instrument this 11th day of March A. D. 1857.

Witnesses

Elizabeth Jane Weimer Seal

Peter L. [illegible] Weimer Seal.

mark

20

As of May 1859, Reverend D. F. MacDonald had left Coloma for the Stockton circuit. Prior to his leaving El Dorado County he published the book *Moral Law: A Series of Practical Sermons of the Ten Commandments* with proceeds to benefit the Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Coloma. The book originally sold for $2.00. There are no records of the amount of money that was raised from the sales of this book. This book has undergone multiple reprints since its initial publication.

THE MORAL LAW:

A SERIES OF PRACTICAL SERMONS

THE only object the writer of this book had in getting the following sermons printed, was to raise money to pay a church debt. He knows full well that they are very ordinary productions; and that they are nothing in sum and substance but what the reader may find in any writer upon the law. They were prepared in a hurry—so the reader will read and examine in charity.

The Reverend D. F. Macdonald, Kips first ordinand who served at Coloma, in 1858 elucidated for the *Illustrated London News* what troubles Kip faced in his fledgling diocese:

"He had "to conciliate many clashing and unruly elements…unite a mixed, excitable, and restless population; bring the Gospel again to hosts of revolted and insubordinate Christians, many of whom think it the very essence of freedom is to cast aside the most ordinary restraints of religion…. Although now entirely cut off from his old associations and many of his former pursuits, and although now encompassed by difficulties of no ordinary kind, yet neither are his energies nor courage in any degree abated; but, like his Lord and Master of old, he goes out into the wilderness (and this is indeed a very hot and dusty one) to sow the good seed beside many waters."[22]

On June 15th, 1858, Bishop Kip reports the Vestry voted to sell the Emmanuel Church. Through his efforts and those of the parishioners of the Emmanuel the church, however, was never sold and remained in use.

"News from the Pacific."

Letter from Bishop Kip.

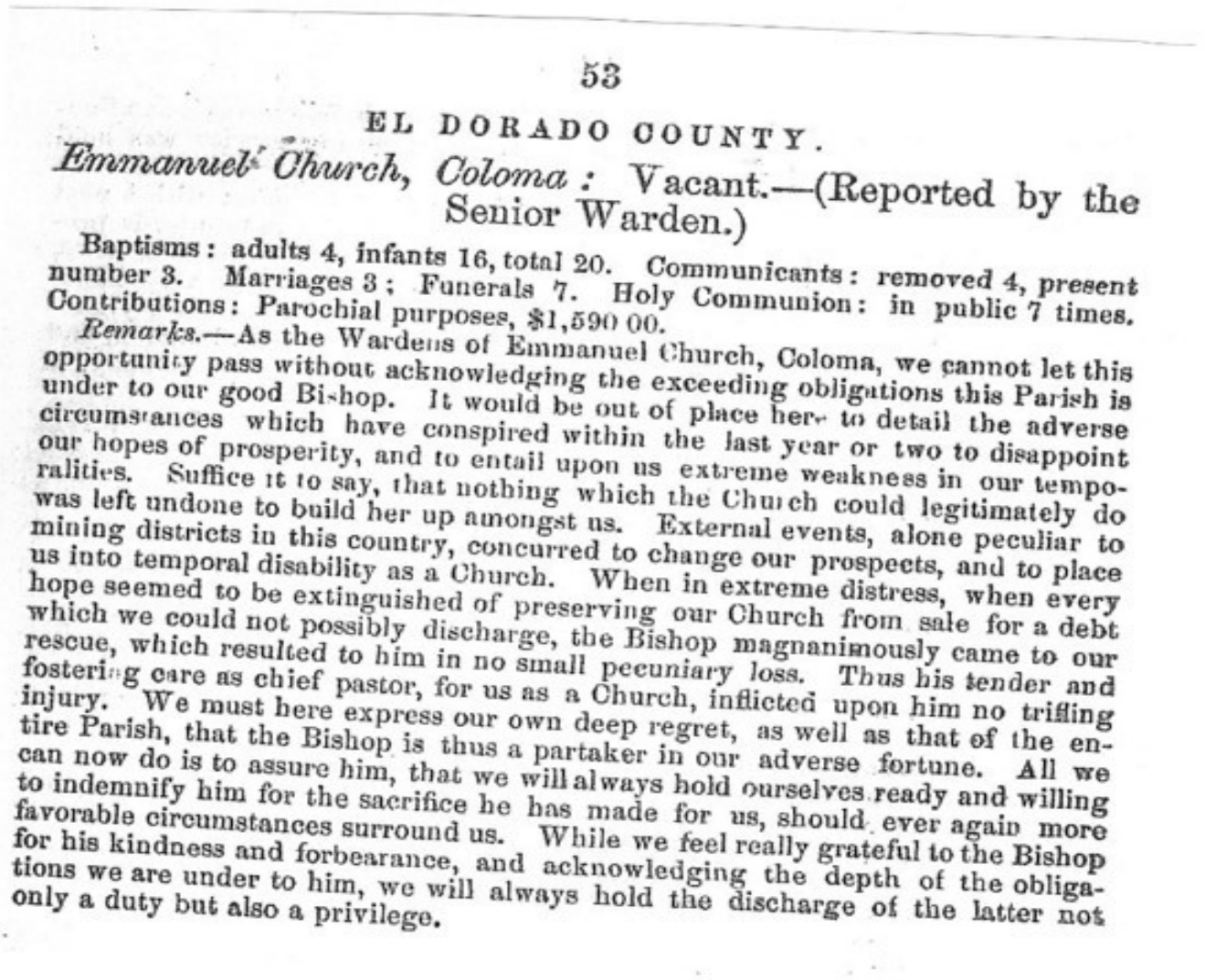
San Francisco.
June 15, 1858.

My Dear Dr.:

I returned last night from the mountains, tired out, and this morning received your letter. As I leave in a couple of days again for Stockton, I must write now.

At present the whole state is perfectly paralyzed. The Frazer mines (in British Possessions) have acted like insanity on the people. It is estimated 3000 persons a week leave this port for the north. Some of the mining towns are almost entirely depopulated. When at Coloma, last Sunday, the vestry passed a resolution to close the church, and suffer it to be sold for $2000 of debt (it cost $7000), out of pure discouragement, from the exodus from the town. I interfered to help them from here, and to carry them along for the present till this storm be overpast—I trust I may succeed. It is estimated 50,000 people will leave the State in the next 90 days. Such are the uncertainties of a gold country. What am I to do to found a church in this whirlwind?

Report from the *Journal of the Ninth Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of California*, May 1859, thanking Bishop Kip for saving the Emmanuel Church.



53

EL DORADO COUNTY.

Emmanuel Church, Coloma: Vacant.—(Reported by the Senior Warden.)

Baptisms: adults 4, infants 16, total 20. Communicants: removed 4, present number 3. Marriages 3; Funerals 7. Holy Communion: in public 7 times. Contributions: Parochial purposes, $1,590 00.

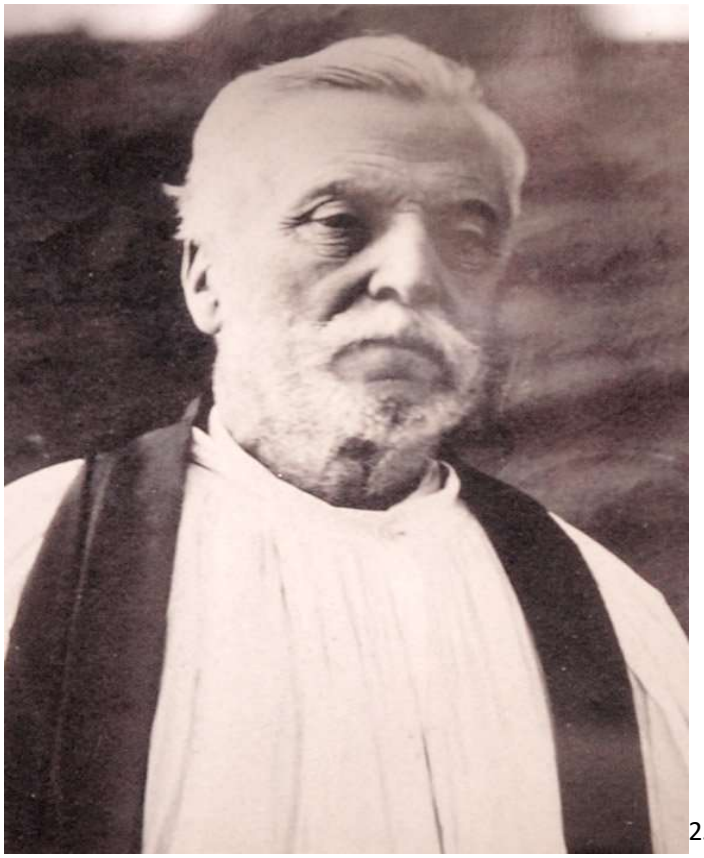
Remarks.—As the Wardens of Emmanuel Church, Coloma, we cannot let this opportunity pass without acknowledging the exceeding obligations this Parish is under to our good Bishop. It would be out of place here to detail the adverse circumstances which have conspired within the last year or two to disappoint our hopes of prosperity, and to entail upon us extreme weakness in our temporalities. Suffice it to say, that nothing which the Church could legitimately do was left undone to build her up amongst us. External events, alone peculiar to mining districts in this country, concurred to change our prospects, and to place us into temporal disability as a Church. When in extreme distress, when every hope seemed to be extinguished of preserving our Church from sale for a debt which we could not possibly discharge, the Bishop magnanimously came to our rescue, which resulted to him in no small pecuniary loss. Thus his tender and fostering care as chief pastor, for us as a Church, inflicted upon him no trifling injury. We must here express our own deep regret, as well as that of the entire Parish, that the Bishop is thus a partaker in our adverse fortune. All we can now do is to assure him, that we will always hold ourselves ready and willing to indemnify him for the sacrifice he has made for us, should ever again more favorable circumstances surround us. While we feel really grateful to the Bishop for his kindness and forbearance, and acknowledging the depth of the obligations we are under to him, we will always hold the discharge of the latter not only a duty but also a privilege.

24

The 1860 Federal census lists the white population of Coloma as 1052.

The Rev. C. C. Peirce arrives in Placerville in 1861 and begins preaching in El Dorado County, including the Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Coloma as one of up to twenty-one locations in El Dorado County. The Reverend continued preaching until the year of his death in 1903. His life's work and dedication to the people of El Dorado County is detailed in the 1903 book, *The Life and Work of the Reverend C. C. Peirce* by Charles Elmer Upton.

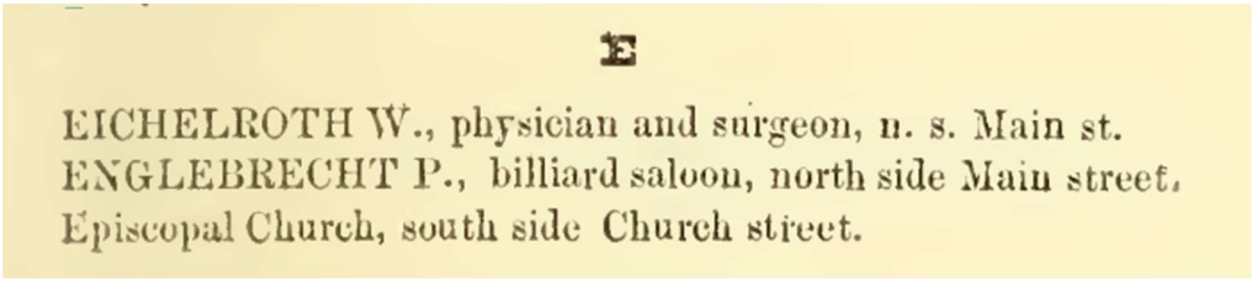
The 1861 *Mt. Democrat's* listings for Churches shows Rev. C. C. Peirce holding services in Placerville and Coloma on the first and third Sundays of the month.


25

The Reverend Charles Caleb Peirce

In 1862 the Protestant Episcopal Church minutes Reverend C.C. Pierce reports *"that services were held in the Emmanuel Episcopal Church on the first and third Sunday evenings of each month with regular attendance of twenty to fifty. We hope to see this beautiful Church building, the only one that we have in this County as yet filled with as in former years by a zealous congregation."*[26]

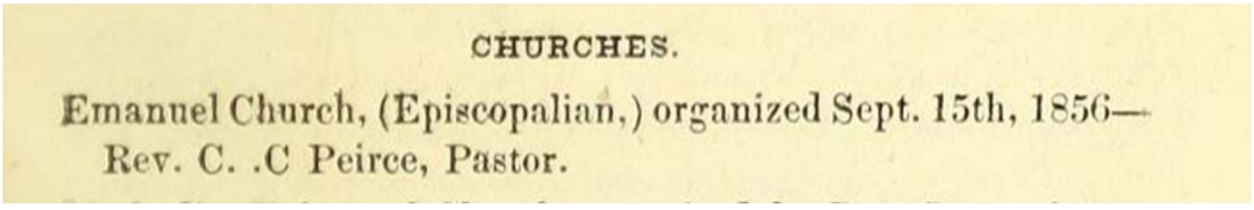
1862 Directory of the City of Placerville, Coloma section.



E

EICHELROTH W., physician and surgeon, n. s. Main st.
ENGLEBRECHT P., billiard saloon, north side Main street.
Episcopal Church, south side Church street.

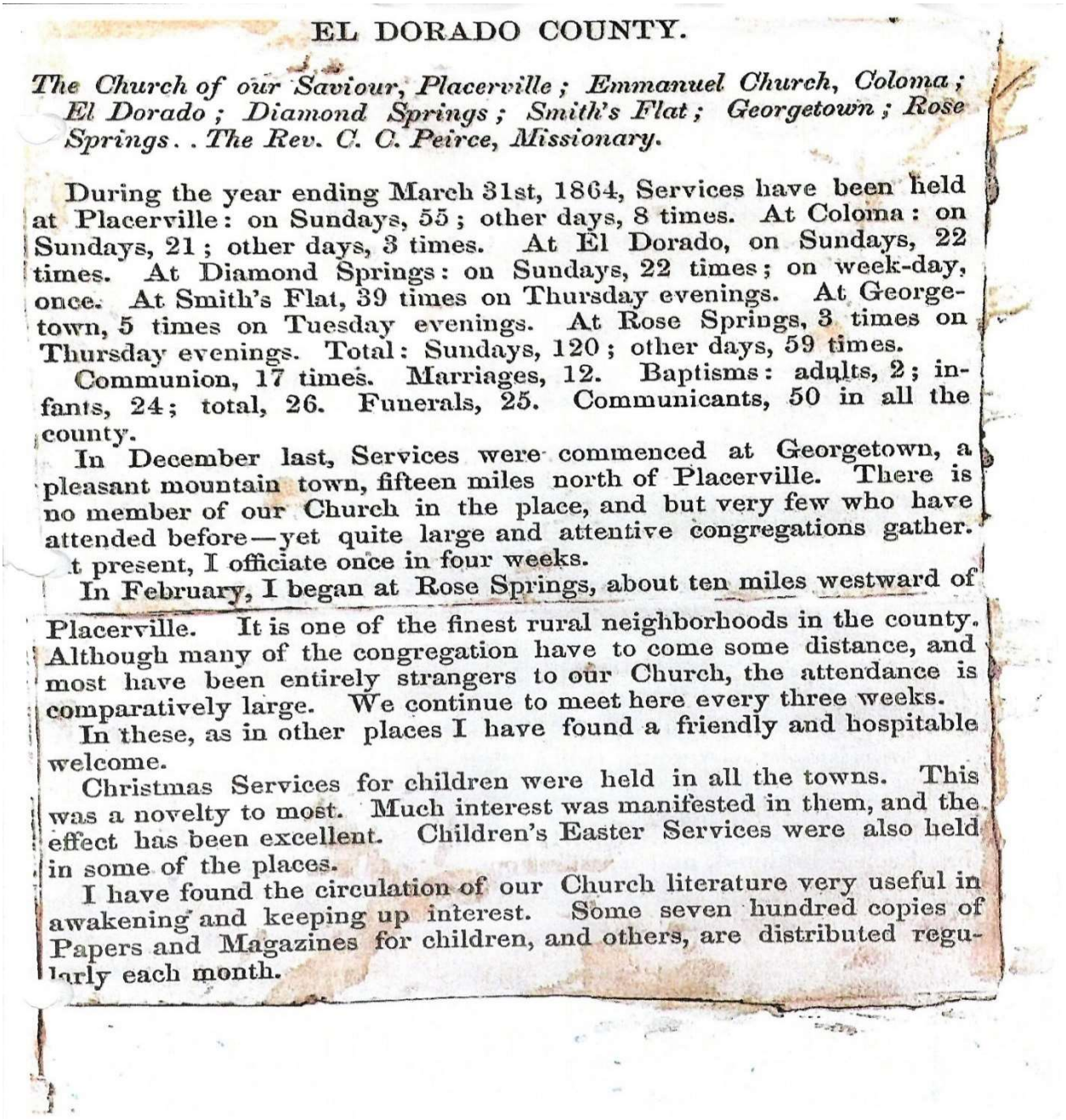
[27] *1862 Placerville City Guide*, Coloma Section, page 11. "Three quite good churches buildings, occupied by M.E. Church, the Episcopalian Church, and the Catholic. Church. Emmanuel Church (Episcopalian,) organized Sept. 15, 1856, Rev. C. C. Peirce Pastor.



CHURCHES.

Emanuel Church, (Episcopalian,) organized Sept. 15th, 1856—
Rev. C. .C Peirce, Pastor.

[28]



EL DORADO COUNTY.

The Church of our Saviour, Placerville; Emmanuel Church, Coloma; El Dorado; Diamond Springs; Smith's Flat; Georgetown; Rose Springs. . The Rev. C. C. Peirce, Missionary.

During the year ending March 31st, 1864, Services have been held at Placerville: on Sundays, 55; other days, 8 times. At Coloma: on Sundays, 21; other days, 3 times. At El Dorado, on Sundays, 22 times. At Diamond Springs: on Sundays, 22 times; on week-day, once. At Smith's Flat, 39 times on Thursday evenings. At Georgetown, 5 times on Tuesday evenings. At Rose Springs, 3 times on Thursday evenings. Total: Sundays, 120; other days, 59 times.

Communion, 17 times. Marriages, 12. Baptisms: adults, 2; infants, 24; total, 26. Funerals, 25. Communicants, 50 in all the county.

In December last, Services were commenced at Georgetown, a pleasant mountain town, fifteen miles north of Placerville. There is no member of our Church in the place, and but very few who have attended before—yet quite large and attentive congregations gather. t present, I officiate once in four weeks.

In February, I began at Rose Springs, about ten miles westward of Placerville. It is one of the finest rural neighborhoods in the county. Although many of the congregation have to come some distance, and most have been entirely strangers to our Church, the attendance is comparatively large. We continue to meet here every three weeks.

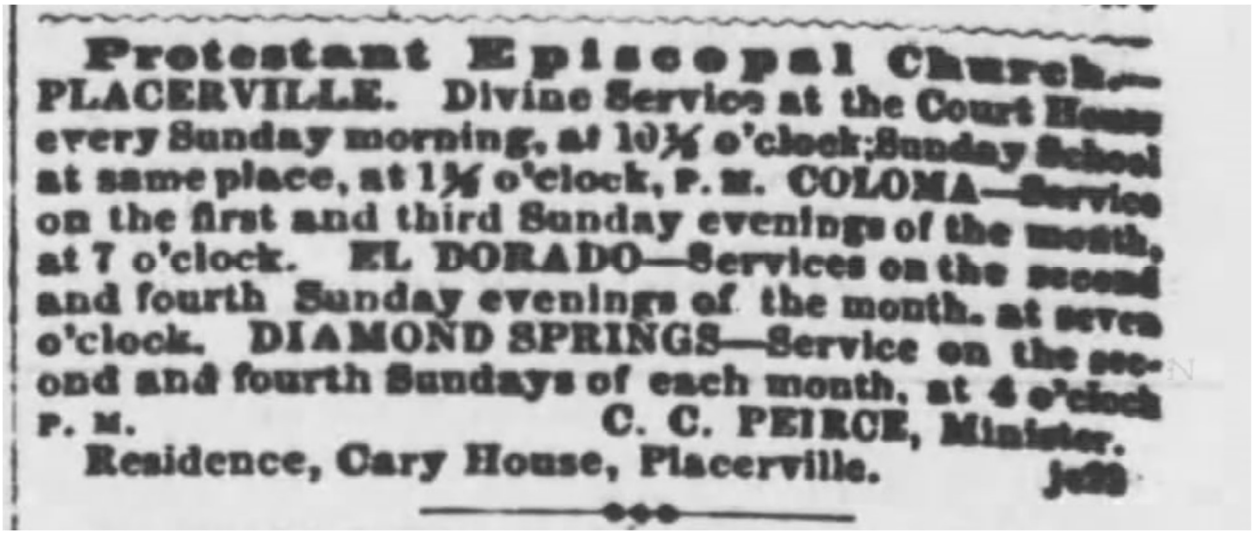
In these, as in other places I have found a friendly and hospitable welcome.

Christmas Services for children were held in all the towns. This was a novelty to most. Much interest was manifested in them, and the effect has been excellent. Children's Easter Services were also held in some of the places.

I have found the circulation of our Church literature very useful in awakening and keeping up interest. Some seven hundred copies of Papers and Magazines for children, and others, are distributed regularly each month.

29

From the *1863 Report on the Episcopal Methodist Churches in El Dorado County*. Copied from the Proceedings of the Ninth Covention of the Prodestant Episcopal Church, May, 1859. As originally published in *The Life and Work of the Reverend C. C. Peirce.*



Protestant Episcopal Church.—PLACERVILLE. Divine Service at the Court House every Sunday morning, at 10½ o'clock; Sunday School at same place, at 1½ o'clock, P. M. COLOMA—Service on the first and third Sunday evenings of the month, at 7 o'clock. EL DORADO—Services on the second and fourth Sunday evenings of the month, at seven o'clock. DIAMOND SPRINGS—Service on the second and fourth Sundays of each month, at 4 o'clock P. M.

C. C. PEIRCE, Minister.
Residence, Cary House, Placerville. jn28

Mountain Democrat February 7, 1863

The 1870 Federal census lists the White population in Coloma as 663. A ten-year loss of 559 people.

The most common recollection of the Rev. Peirce is that he always greeted people with the same saying "*A model day for a pilgrim*."[30]

As of 1870 The Methodists are now found sharing the use of the Emmanuel Episcopal Church, abandoning their use and interest in the Coloma IOOF Hall. This was documented in the 1928 "Installation Celebration of the dedication of the "Memorial Tablet in Honor of the Methodist Pioneers" at Emmanuel church highlighted the joint use by the Methodist and Episcopalians in 1870. This plaque was stored at the University of the Pacific of Stockton's archives and returned to the State Park sometime in the 1970's. Reinstalled on the interior of the church in November 2024 in preparation for the re-dedication of the Emmanuel church in December of 2024.

THE MEMORIAL TABLET

IN MEMORY OF
THE METHODIST PIONEERS
WHO FOUNDED
COLOMA METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
THE FIRST PROTESTANT CHURCH IN THE BOUNDS
OF CALIFORNIA
THE FOUNDERS
REV. WILLIAM ROBERTS,
SUPT. OF OREGON - CALIFORNIA MISSION - 1847
REV. ISAAC OWEN,
PRESIDING ELDER OF CALIFORNIA DISTRICT - 1850
FIRST PASTORS
REV. ELIHU ANTHONY - 1849 REV. WARREN OLIVER - 1850
ISAAC F. BENNETT, CLASS LEADER - 1849

The tablet is the gift of the California Annual Conference of the Methodist Church. Conference Committee: Rev. Frank K. Baker, Rev. C. A. Richardson, Rev. W. S. Matthew.

* * *

COLOMA METHODIST CHURCH

First pastor, Elihu Anthony—1849.

Church organized—1850, Warren Oliver, pastor.

Principal point of a circuit including Diamond Springs, Cold Springs, Uniontown and Coloma in 1855.

In 1866 Coloma was made a part of Georgetown-Coloma circuit.

In 1918 the name was changed to "Placerville Circuit" and ministers of Placerville Methodist Church served as pastors.

Since the federation of the Methodist and Presbyterian churches of Placerville in 1927, the Church has been served by ministers of the El Dorado County Federated Church.

THE CHURCH BUILDING

Erected in 1855 by the Episcopalians.

Became the property of the Methodist Church and extensive repairs made in 1921.

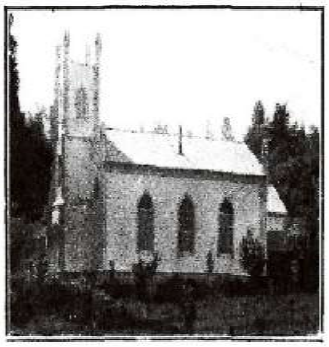
Used by both Episcopalians and Methodists since 1870.

INSTALLATION SERVICE

MEMORIAL TABLET

IN HONOR OF METHODIST PIONEERS

IN

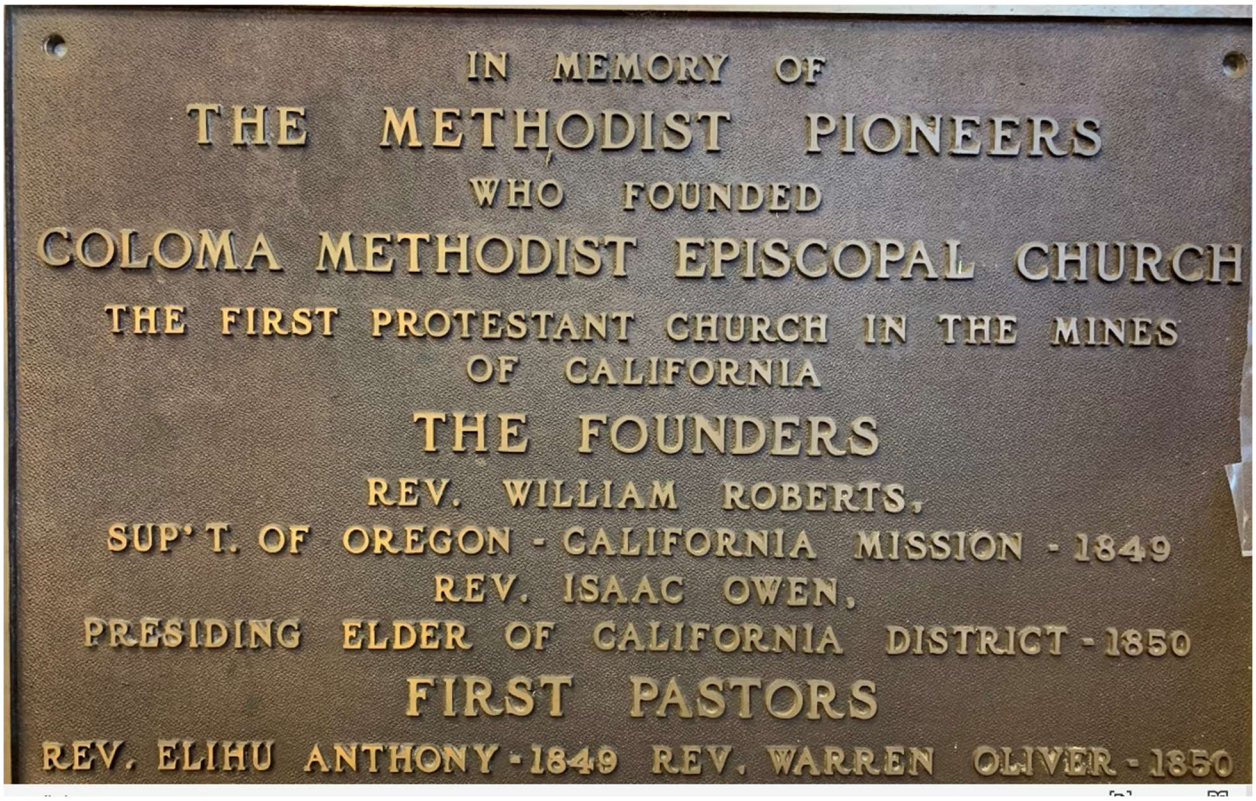


EMMANUEL CHURCH

COLOMA, CALIFORNIA

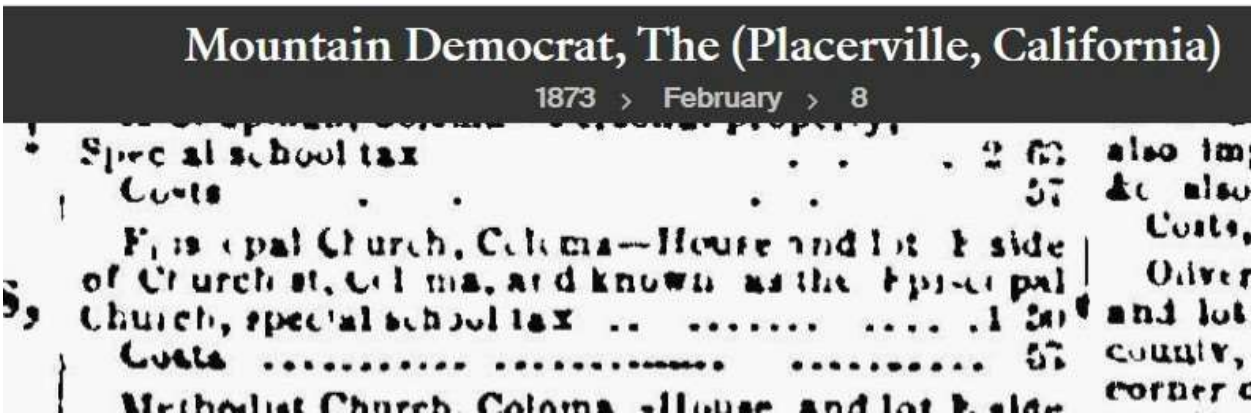
Sunday Afternoon, June 24, 1928

3:30 o'clock

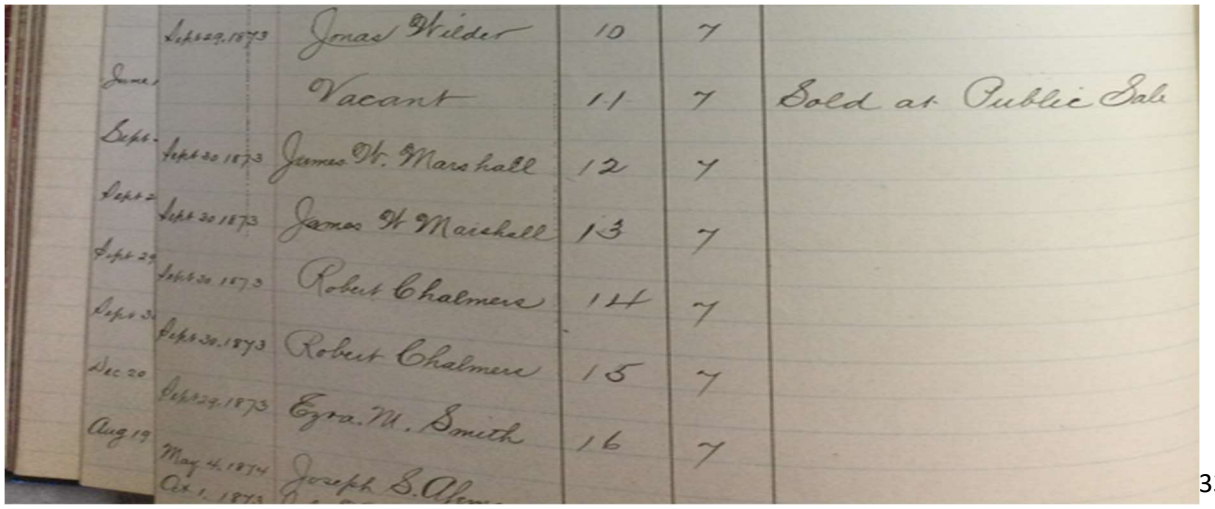

IN MEMORY OF
THE METHODIST PIONEERS
WHO FOUNDED
COLOMA METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
THE FIRST PROTESTANT CHURCH IN THE MINES OF CALIFORNIA
THE FOUNDERS
REV. WILLIAM ROBERTS,
SUP'T. OF OREGON - CALIFORNIA MISSION - 1849
REV. ISAAC OWEN,
PRESIDING ELDER OF CALIFORNIA DISTRICT - 1850
FIRST PASTORS
REV. ELIHU ANTHONY - 1849 REV. WARREN OLIVER - 1850

This tablet was placed on the Emmanuel Church by the Methodist California Conference in 1925.[31]

In February 1873, the Emmanuel Church is reported delinquent on taxes and listed to be sold by El Dorado County at a lien sale.



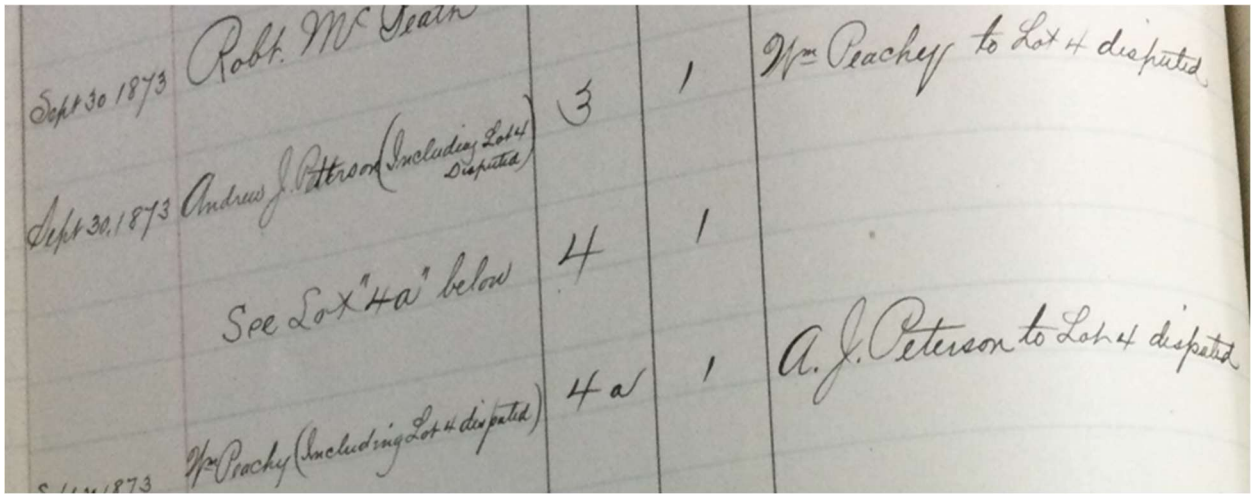
George Johnson wrote that during the offical August 16th, 1873 El Dorado County survey of the Town of Coloma, no one from the Church was present to claim the Emmanuel Episcopal Church. As no one showed up to claim the parcel or post past due taxes the land was subsequently claimed by Robert Chalmers. [32] The official deed logbook of Judge Irwin on page 98 of the official 1873 El Dorado County survey of Coloma shows exactly that, one lot that includes the Emmanuel Church, with that parcel being lot 14 in block 7.



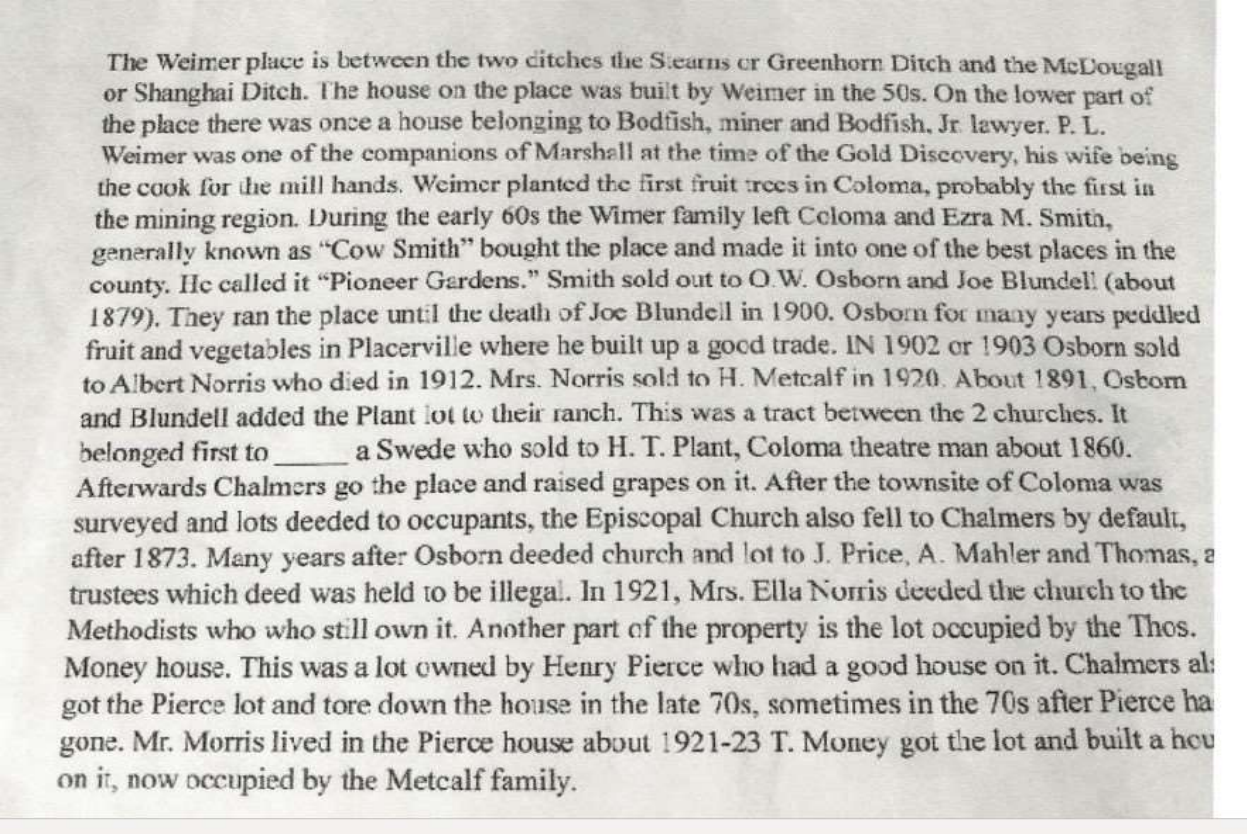
	Sept 29, 1873	Jonas Wilder	10	7	
Jan		Vacant	11	7	Sold at Public Sale
Sept	Sept 30 1873	James H. Marshall	12	7	
Sept 2	Sept 30 1873	James H Marshall	13	7	
Sept 29	Sept 30 1873	Robert Chalmers	14	7	
Sept 30	Sept 30, 1873	Robert Chalmers	15	7	
Dec 20	Sept 29, 1873	Ezra N. Smith	16	7	
Aug 19	May 4, 1874	Joseph S. Alen			
	Oct 1, 1873				

[33]

No one had contested this deed as Judge Irwin would have noted it as is seen in various other transactions found in Irwin's logbook. [34]



Sept 30 1873	Robt. McGean	3	1	Wm Peachey to Lot 4 disputed
Sept 30, 1873	Andrew J. Pettrood (Including Lot 4 Disputed)	4	1	
	See Lot "4a" below	4a	1	A. J. Peterson to Lot 4 disputed
	Wm Peachy (Including Lot 4 disputed)			
	1873			



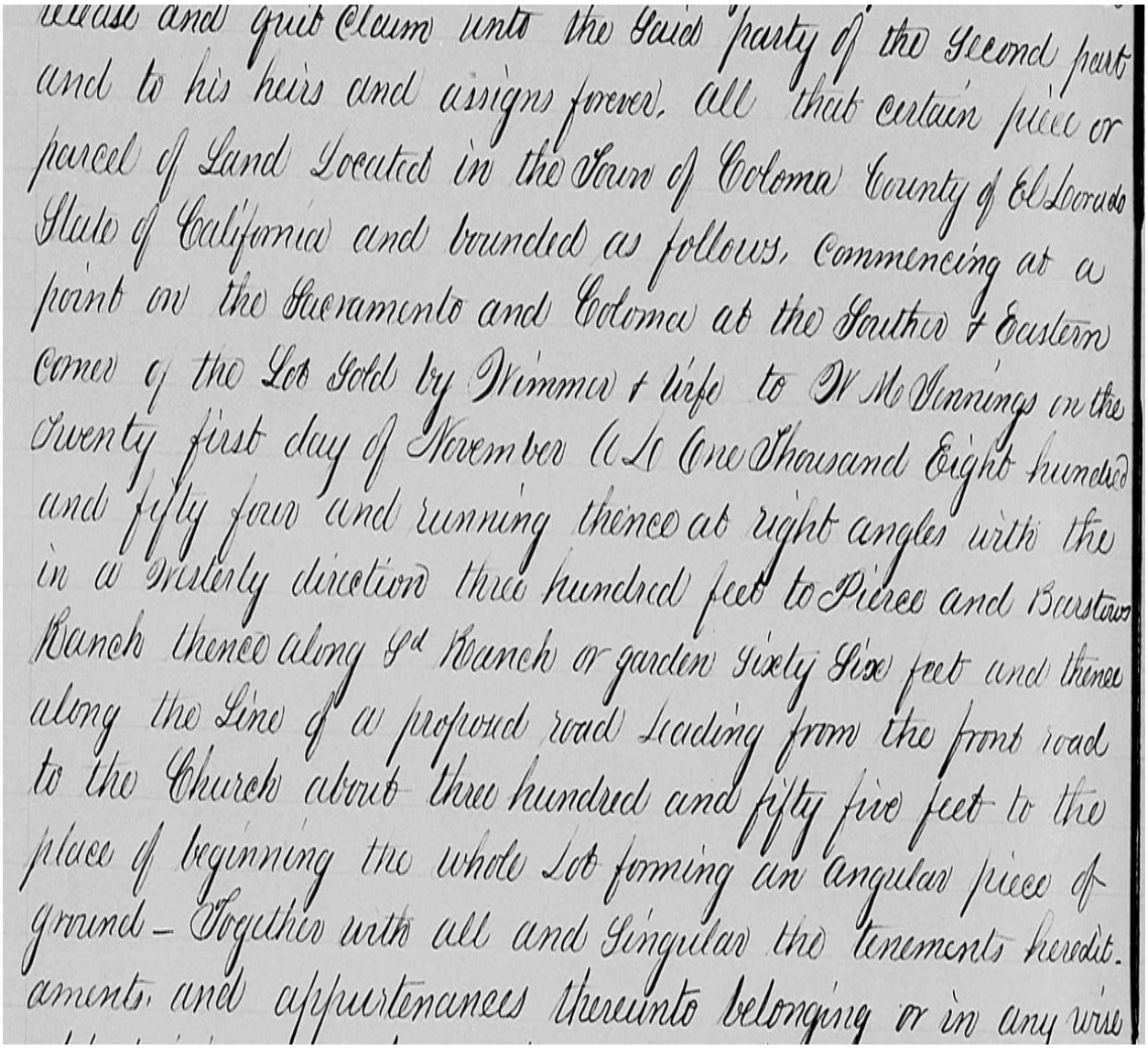
The Weimer place is between the two ditches the Stearns or Greenhorn Ditch and the McDougall or Shanghai Ditch. The house on the place was built by Weimer in the 50s. On the lower part of the place there was once a house belonging to Bodfish, miner and Bodfish, Jr. lawyer. P. L. Weimer was one of the companions of Marshall at the time of the Gold Discovery, his wife being the cook for the mill hands. Weimer planted the first fruit trees in Coloma, probably the first in the mining region. During the early 60s the Wimer family left Coloma and Ezra M. Smith, generally known as "Cow Smith" bought the place and made it into one of the best places in the county. He called it "Pioneer Gardens." Smith sold out to O.W. Osborn and Joe Blundell (about 1879). They ran the place until the death of Joe Blundell in 1900. Osborn for many years peddled fruit and vegetables in Placerville where he built up a good trade. IN 1902 or 1903 Osborn sold to Albert Norris who died in 1912. Mrs. Norris sold to H. Metcalf in 1920. About 1891, Osborn and Blundell added the Plant lot to their ranch. This was a tract between the 2 churches. It belonged first to _____ a Swede who sold to H. T. Plant, Coloma theatre man about 1860. Afterwards Chalmers go the place and raised grapes on it. After the townsite of Coloma was surveyed and lots deeded to occupants, the Episcopal Church also fell to Chalmers by default, after 1873. Many years after Osborn deeded church and lot to J. Price, A. Mahler and Thomas, a trustees which deed was held to be illegal. In 1921, Mrs. Ella Norris deeded the church to the Methodists who who still own it. Another part of the property is the lot occupied by the Thos. Money house. This was a lot owned by Henry Pierce who had a good house on it. Chalmers al got the Pierce lot and tore down the house in the late 70s, sometimes in the 70s after Pierce ha gone. Mr. Morris lived in the Pierce house about 1921-23 T. Money got the lot and built a hou on it, now occupied by the Metcalf family.

35

No record of lien sale for the Emmanuel church has been found in the El Dorado County Recorders /Clerks office records that would indicate how the Emmanuel church property was combined with the surrounding Chalmers property into Lot 14 of Block 7. Why during the El Dorado County official land survey in 1873 the Emmanuel Church was placed in/on Lot 14, Block 7 and not listed as its own lot(s) as the original deed from the Nichols and Wimmer families would indicate, can only be speculation. However, Robert Chalmers had previously purchased the Wimmer and Merrill properties that surrounded the Emmanuel Church and these were then included in the area plotted onto Lots 14 and 15, Block 7 during the same 1873 survey.

Robert Chalmers at the time of this land purchase was one of the wealthiest men in town and a Commissioner of the Methodist primary school and a Trustee of the Methodist church.

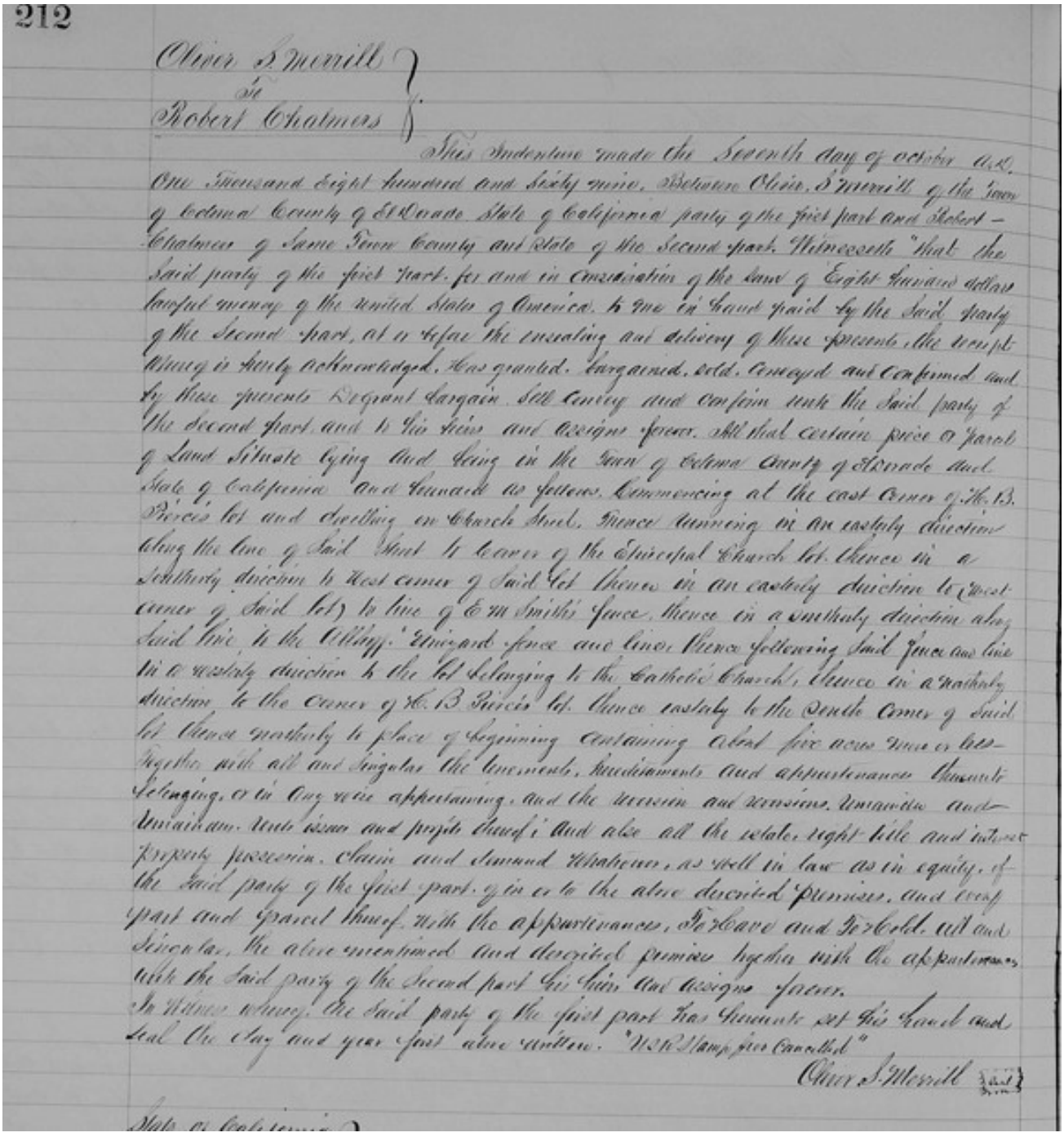
At the time of the survey by the County the Methodists had been jointly using the Emmanuel church with Episcopals for three years alternating service time with the Rev. C.C. Peirce.



release and quit Claim unto the said party of the second part and to his heirs and assigns forever. all that certain piece or parcel of Land Located in the Town of Coloma County of El Dorado State of California and bounded as follows. Commencing at a point on the Sacramento and Coloma at the Southern & Eastern corner of the Lot Sold by Wimmer & Wife to W. McInnings on the Twenty first day of November A.D. One Thousand Eight hundred and fifty four and running thence at right angles with the in a Westerly direction three hundred feet to Pierce and Barstows Ranch thence along Sd Ranch or garden Sixty Six feet and thence along the Line of a proposed road Leading from the front road to the Church about three hundred and fifty five feet to the place of beginning the whole Lot forming an angular piece of ground – Together with all and Singular the tenements hereditaments and appurtenances thereunto belonging or in any wise

36

Prior Wimmer deed to Robert Chalmers for Lot 14, Block 7



212

Oliver S Merrill
to
Robert Chalmers

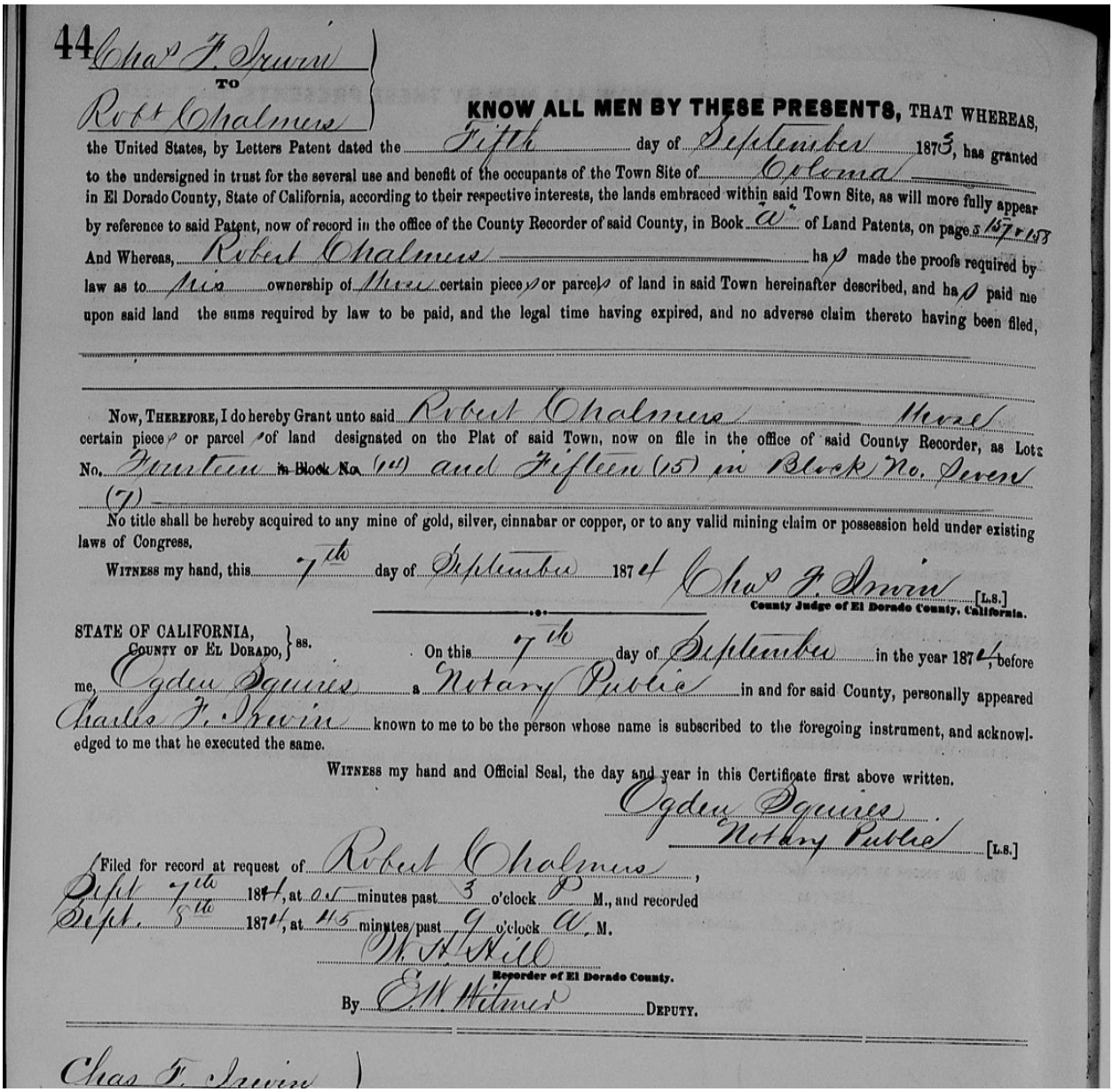
This Indenture made the Seventh day of october A.D. One Thousand Eight hundred and Sixty nine, Between Oliver S Merrill of the Town of Colusa County of El Dorado State of California party of the first part and Robert Chalmers of Same Town County and State of the Second part. Witnesseth "that the said party of the first part. for and in Consideration of the Sum of Eight Thousand dollars lawful money of the United States of America. to him in hand paid by the said party of the Second part, at or before the ensealing and delivery of these presents, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged. Has granted. bargained. sold. Conveyed and Confirmed and by these presents Do grant bargain Sell Convey and confirm unto the said party of the second part and to his heirs and assigns forever. All that certain piece or parcel of Land Situate lying and being in the Town of Colusa County of El Dorado and State of California And bounded as follows. Commencing at the east corner of H. B. Pierce's lot and dwelling on Church Street. Thence running in an easterly direction along the line of said Street to Corner of the Episcopal Church lot. thence in a Southerly direction to West corner of said lot thence in an easterly direction to West corner of said lot) to line of E M Smiths fence. thence in a Southerly direction along said line to the Alley. Vineyard fence and line. thence following said fence and line in a westerly direction to the lot belonging to the Catholic Church, thence in a northerly direction to the corner of H. B Pierce's lot. thence easterly to the South corner of said lot thence northerly to place of beginning containing about five acres more or less together with all and singular the tenements, hereditaments and appurtenances thereunto belonging, or in any wise appertaining, and the reversion and reversions. remainder and remainders rents issues and profits thereof; And also all the estate, right title and interest property possession, claim and demand whatsoever, as well in law as in equity, of the said party of the first part, of in or to the above described premises. and every part and parcel thereof. With the appurtenances, To Have and To Hold. All and Singular, the above mentioned and described premises together with the appurtenances unto the said party of the Second part his heirs and assigns forever.
In Witness whereof, the said party of the first part has hereunto set his hand and seal the day and year first above written. "U.S.R. Stamps fire Cancelled"

Oliver S Merrill [seal]

State of California }

37

Prior deed from Judge Oliver Merrill to Robert Chalmers for Lot 15, Block 7



44 Chas F. Irwin
TO
Robt Chalmers

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, THAT WHEREAS, the United States, by Letters Patent dated the Fifth day of September 1873, has granted to the undersigned in trust for the several use and benefit of the occupants of the Town Site of Coloma in El Dorado County, State of California, according to their respective interests, the lands embraced within said Town Site, as will more fully appear by reference to said Patent, now of record in the office of the County Recorder of said County, in Book "A" of Land Patents, on page 157 & 158 And Whereas, Robert Chalmers has made the proofs required by law as to his ownership of Mine certain piece or parcel of land in said Town hereinafter described, and has paid me upon said land the sums required by law to be paid, and the legal time having expired, and no adverse claim thereto having been filed,

Now, THEREFORE, I do hereby Grant unto said Robert Chalmers Mine certain piece or parcel of land designated on the Plat of said Town, now on file in the office of said County Recorder, as Lots No. Fourteen in Block No. (14) and Fifteen (15) in Block No. Seven (7)

No title shall be hereby acquired to any mine of gold, silver, cinnabar or copper, or to any valid mining claim or possession held under existing laws of Congress.

WITNESS my hand, this 7th day of September 1874 Chas F. Irwin [L.S.]
County Judge of El Dorado County, California.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF EL DORADO, } ss. On this 7th day of September in the year 1874, before me, Ogden Squires a Notary Public in and for said County, personally appeared Charles F. Irwin known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument, and acknowledged to me that he executed the same.

WITNESS my hand and Official Seal, the day and year in this Certificate first above written.

Ogden Squires
Notary Public [L.S.]

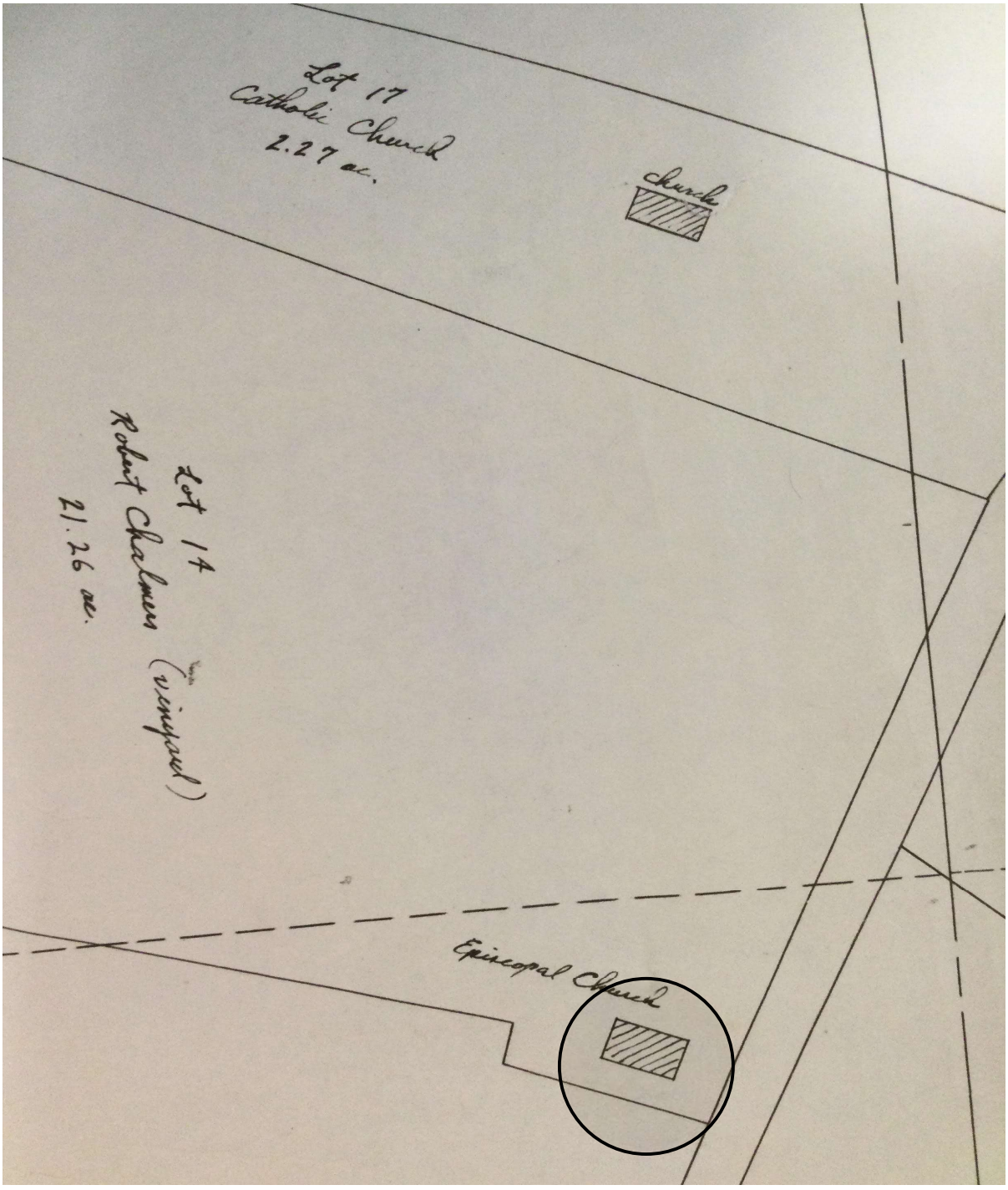
Filed for record at request of Robert Chalmers,
Sept 7th 1874, at 05 minutes past 3 o'clock P. M., and recorded
Sept. 8th 1874, at 15 minutes past 9 o'clock A. M.

W. A. Hill
Recorder of El Dorado County.
By E. M. Holmes DEPUTY.

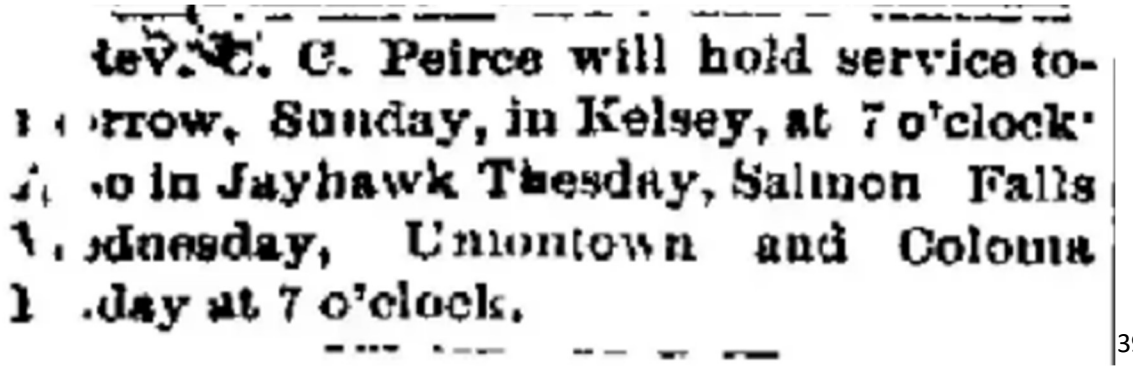
Chas F. Irwin

38

On September 7th, 1873, Robert Chalmers previously purchased lands were recorded in Judge Irwin's logbook and with the County Recorder/Clerk as being deeded both Lot 14 and 15 in Block 7. This deed includes Emmanuel Church lot that was incorporated into Lot 14, Block 7. During the 1873 official survey of Coloma the church was located within Lot 14 and not given its own lot number. This coincides with George Johnson comments.



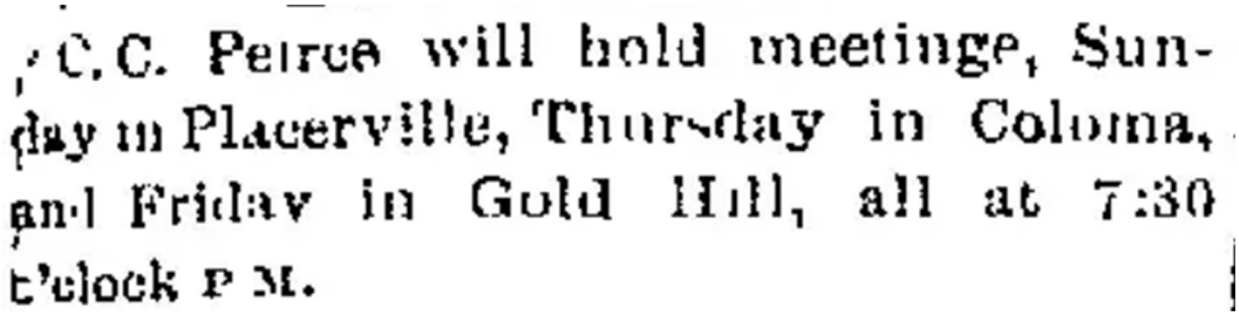
1873 County Survey Map showing Lot 14, Block 7, that includes the Emmanuel Episcopal Church.



tev. C. Peirce will hold service to-
rrow, Sunday, in Kelsey, at 7 o'clock·
o in Jayhawk Tuesday, Salmon Falls
dnesday, Uniontown and Coloma
day at 7 o'clock.

39

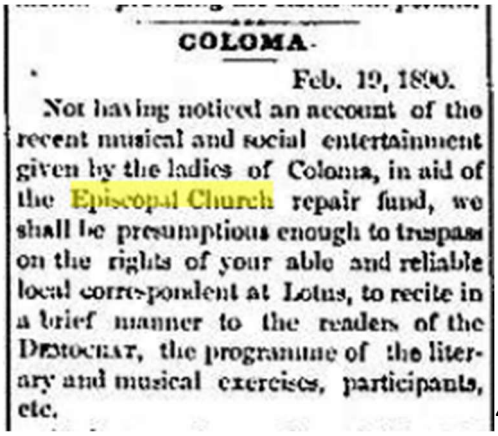
Throughout the years after the Emmanual Church was incorporated into the Chalmers property (lot 14, block 7) the church was continually used by Rev. Peirce as listed in the November 1879 newspaper church schedule as well as by the Methodists under various pastors.



C. C. Peirce will hold meetinge, Sun-
day in Placerville, Thursday in Coloma,
and Friday in Gold Hill, all at 7:30
o'clock P M.

March 1889, listing of church services with the Rev. C.C. Peirce[40]

The Mountain Democrat in February 1890 highlights the fundraising Musical and Social event to raise funds for the Emmanuel Church repair fund that had been planned since 1889.



COLOMA.

Feb. 19, 1880.

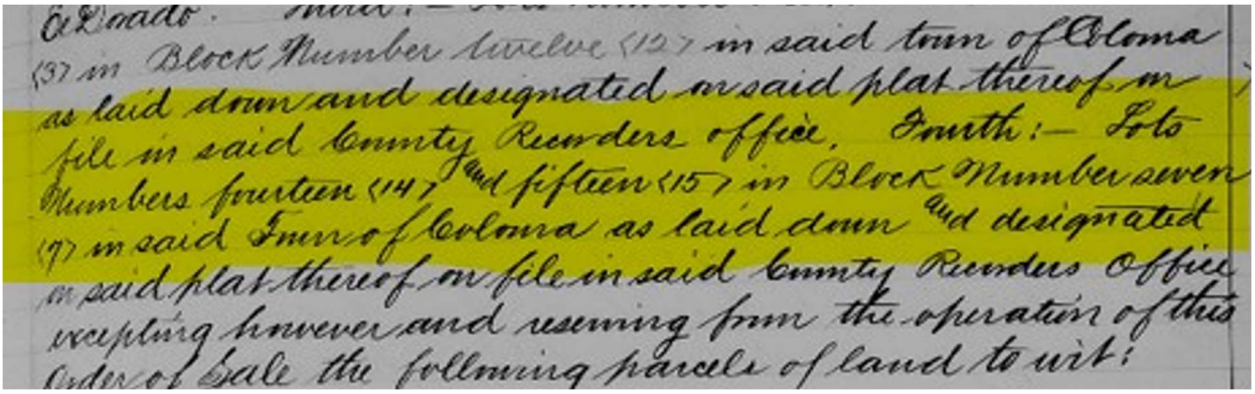
Not having noticed an account of the recent musical and social entertainment given by the ladies of Coloma, in aid of the Episcopal Church repair fund, we shall be presumptious enough to trespass on the rights of your able and reliable local correspondent at Lotus, to recite in a brief manner to the readers of the DEMOCRAT, the programme of the literary and musical exercises, participants, etc.

41

After the death of Robert Chalmers in 1881, the Stockton Building and Loan Association, the bank that held the notes for the Chalmers properties receives Lot 14 & 15, Block 7, which included the Emmanuel Church during a Probate court hearing in El Dorado County, this was awarded in lieu of payment for past due mortgages.

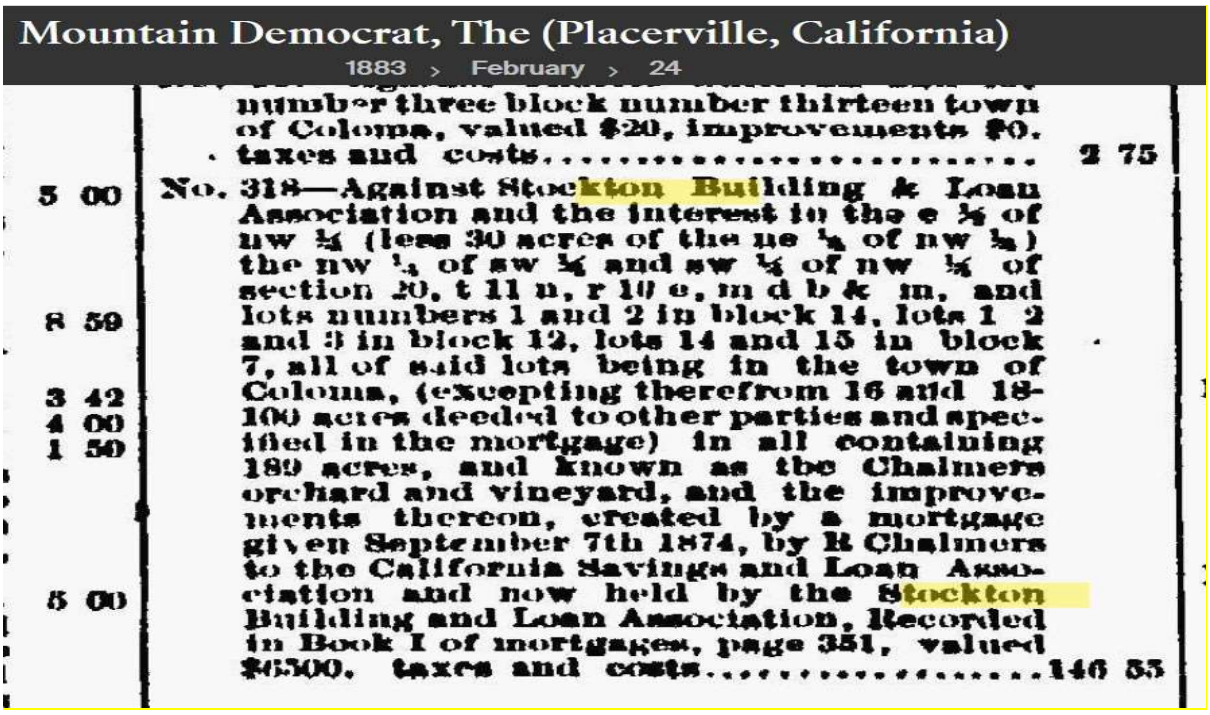
Thos. A. Galt Sheriff
To
The Stockton Building and Loan Assn

This Indenture made this 15th day of March in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eighty six Between Thos. A. Galt Sheriff of the County of El Dorado State of California the party of the first part and The Stockton Building and Loan Association the party of the second part. Witnesseth. Whereas in and by a certain Judgment or Decree rendered by the Superior Court of the County of El Dorado State of California on the thirtieth day of September 1882 and entered on the eighteenth day of October 1882 in a certain action then pending in said Court wherein The Stockton Building and Loan Association was Plaintiff and George Chalmers and Louisa M. Chalmers Executor and Executrix of the last Will and Testament of Robert Chalmers defendant and of which said judgment or decree a certified copy was delivered to said party of the first part as such Sheriff for execution it was among other things ordered adjudged and decreed that all and singular the Mortgaged premises described in the complaint in said action and specifically described in said judgment or decree be sold at public auction by the Sheriff of the County of El Dorado in the manner required by law and according to the course and practice of said Court: that such sale be made at public auction for cash and that said Sheriff execute the usual certificate and deeds to the purchaser or purchasers as required by law. And Whereas the said Sheriff did at the hour of Two o'clock P. M. on the twelfth day of February 1883 after due public notice had been given as required by the laws of this State and the course and practice of said Court duly sell at public auction in front of the Court House in the City of Placerville County of El Dorado agreeably to the said judgment or decree and the provisions of law, the premises in the said decree or judgment mentioned at which sale the portion of said premises in said judgment or decree and hereinafter described were fairly struck off to the said Stockton Building and Loan Association the said party



(37) in Block Number twelve (12) in said town of Coloma as laid down and designated on said plat thereof on file in said County Recorders office. South:- Lots Numbers fourteen (14) and fifteen (15) in Block Number seven (7) in said Town of Coloma as laid down and designated on said plat thereof on file in said County Recorders Office excepting however and reserving from the operation of this Order of Sale the following parcels of land to wit:

42



Mountain Democrat, The (Placerville, California)

1883 > February > 24

number three block number thirteen town of Coloma, valued $20, improvements $0. taxes and costs..... 2 75

5 00 No. 318—Against Stockton Building & Loan Association and the interest in the e ½ of nw ¼ (less 30 acres of the ne ¼ of nw ¼) the nw ¼ of sw ¼ and sw ¼ of nw ¼ of section 20, t 11 n, r 10 e, m d b & m, and

8 59 lots numbers 1 and 2 in block 14, lots 1 2 and 3 in block 12, lots 14 and 15 in block 7, all of said lots being in the town of

3 42 Coloma, (excepting therefrom 16 and 18-

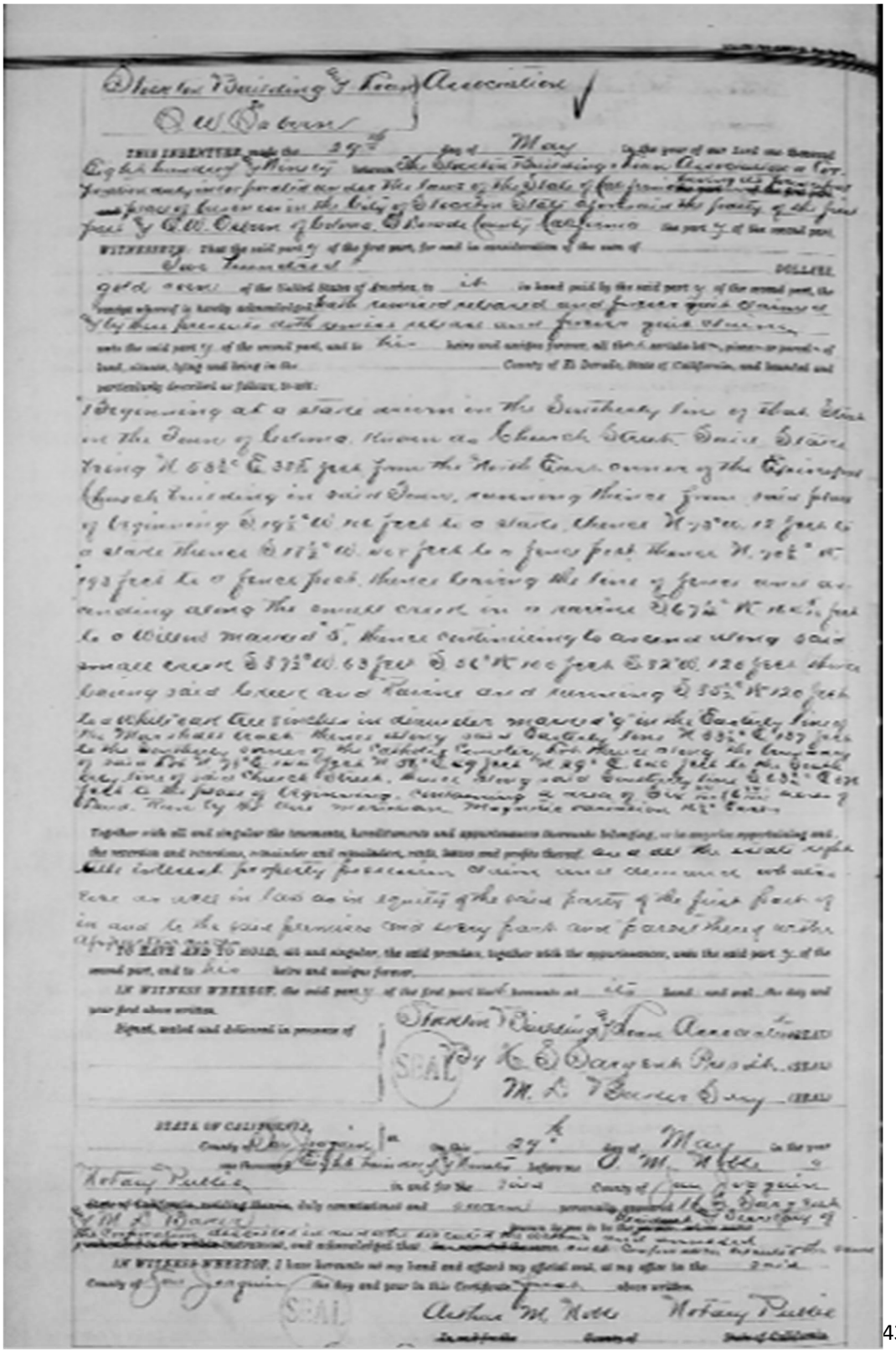
4 00 100 acres deeded to other parties and spec-

1 50 ified in the mortgage) in all containing 189 acres, and known as the Chalmers orchard and vineyard, and the improvements thereon, created by a mortgage given September 7th 1874, by R Chalmers to the California Savings and Loan Asso-

5 00 ciation and now held by the Stockton Building and Loan Association, Recorded in Book I of mortgages, page 351, valued $6500. taxes and costs.....146 55

After the 1873 survey the Emmanuel Episcopal church was never again listed for being in arrears for taxes. The lot that included the Emmanuel church, Lot 14, Block 7, was periodically listed in arrears after the death of Robert Chalmers until its purchase by Oscar Osborn. The Stockton Building and Loan Association held these properties until a sale to Oscar Osborne that occurred in May 1890.

Emmanuel church as shown of modern parcel map.

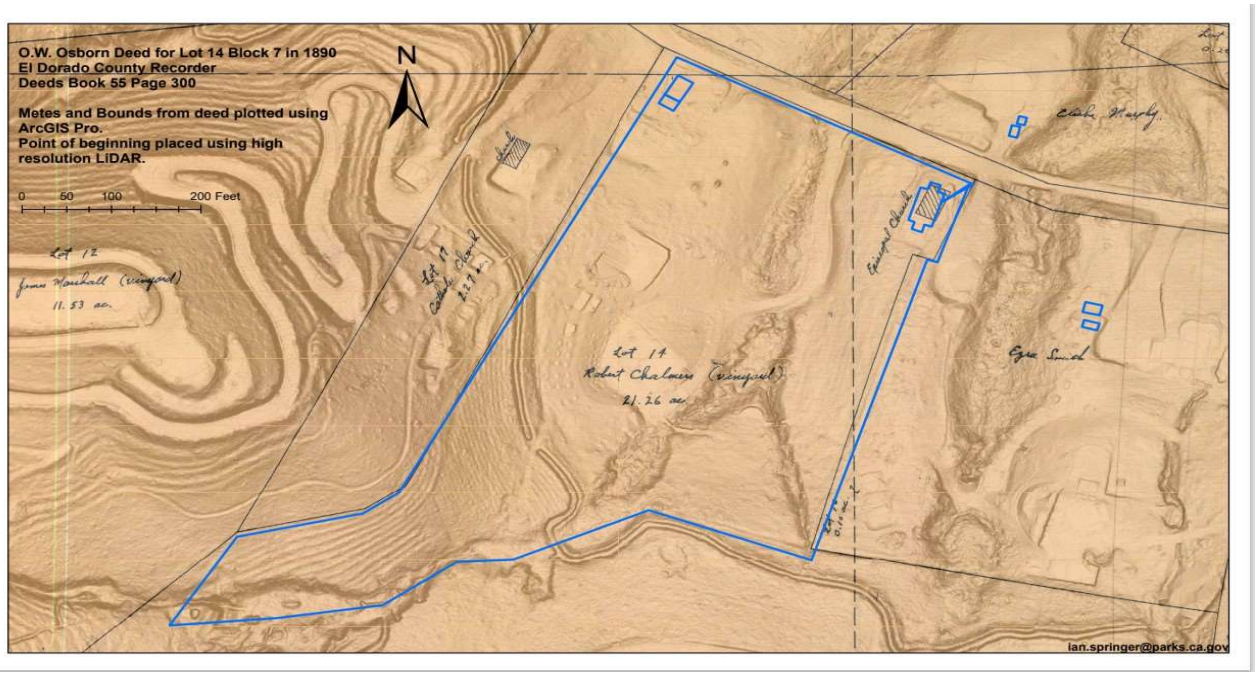


43

May 29, 1890, Purchase of Lots 14 and 15 by Oscar Osborn.

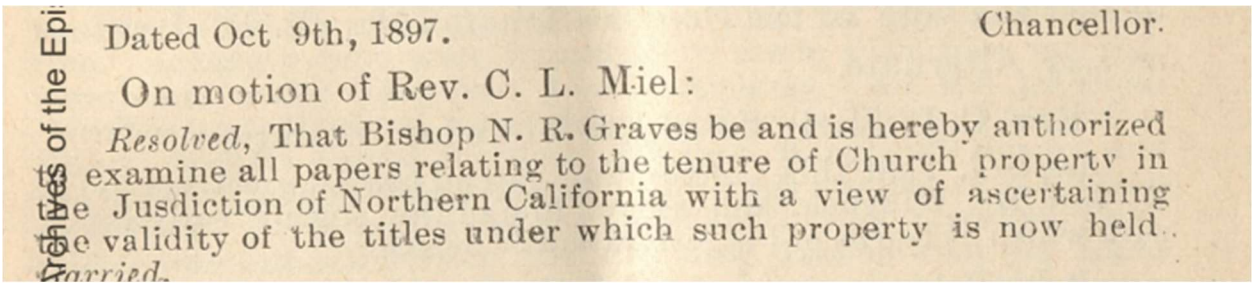
Pearly Monroe relates in the *1959-61 California Revealed* audio tape, *Coloma and Reverend Pierce, Pearlman Monroe*, that he was hired in 1890 by the Reverend Peirce to clean the Emmanuel church prior to the Rev. Peirce performing services.[44]

Rather than describe the property as Lot 14, Block 7 as when acquired by Oscar Osborn in 1890 during probate court, the lot was professionally surveyed prior to sale by the Stockton Building and Loan Association. However, when plotted onto the map of Church Street it is the same as Lot 14, Block 7 as shown on the map below leaving no doubt to properties owned by Robert Chalmers prior to his death.



45

The property titles of all Episcopal Methodist church properties was a topic during the October 1897, Twenty-Third Annual Missionary District of Northern California, Episcopal Convocation. The Coloma church property being one of those in question.



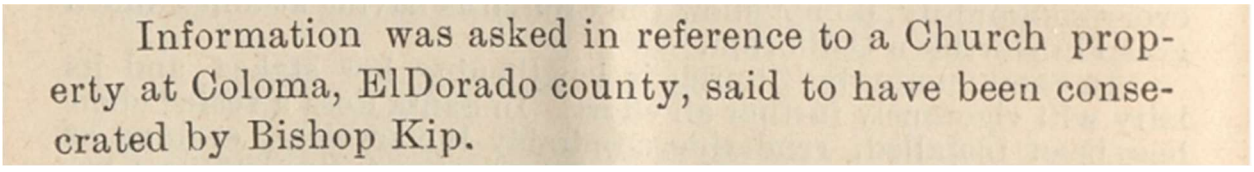
Archives of the Epi

Dated Oct 9th, 1897. Chancellor.

On motion of Rev. C. L. Miel:

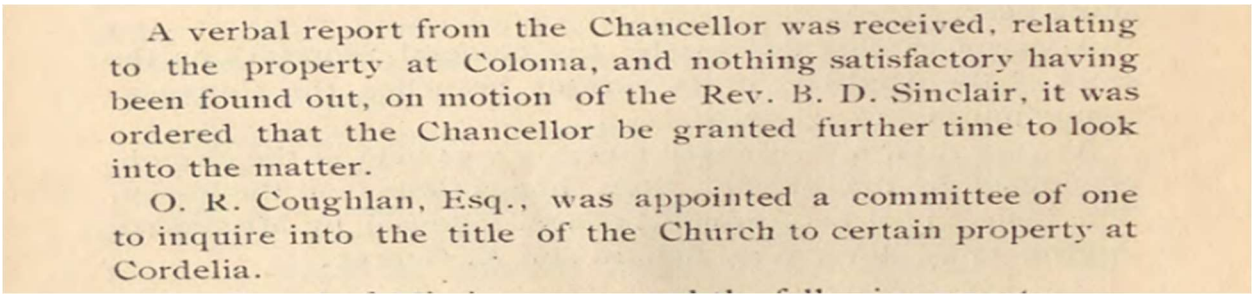
Resolved, That Bishop N. R. Graves be and is hereby authorized to examine all papers relating to the tenure of Church property in the Jusdiction of Northern California with a view of ascertaining the validity of the titles under which such property is now held.

Carried.



Information was asked in reference to a Church property at Coloma, ElDorado county, said to have been consecrated by Bishop Kip.

A year later during the May 1898, Journal of Proceedings of the Twenty-Fourth Annual Missionary District of Northern California, Episcopal Convocation held in Santa Rosa, as the following was recorded in the minutes regarding the Emmanuel church.



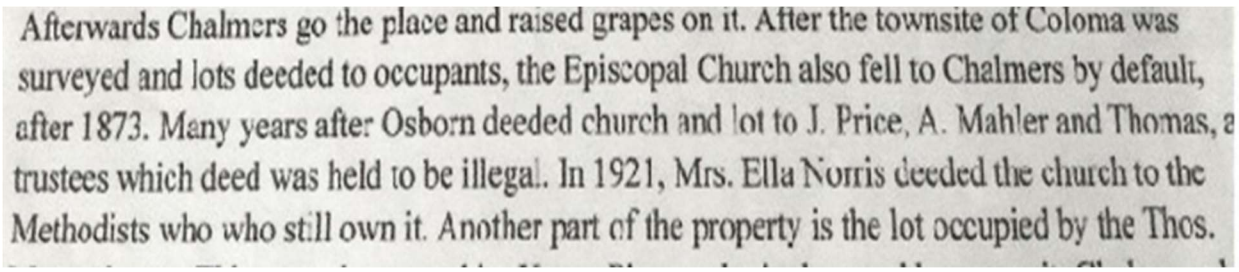
A verbal report from the Chancellor was received, relating to the property at Coloma, and nothing satisfactory having been found out, on motion of the Rev. B. D. Sinclair, it was ordered that the Chancellor be granted further time to look into the matter.

O. R. Coughlan, Esq., was appointed a committee of one to inquire into the title of the Church to certain property at Cordelia.

46

During the October 1899 Convocation of the 25th Missionary Jurisdiction of Northern California, held in Sacramento[47] and the following years up to the death of Reverend Peirce the Convocation's Journals of Proceedings fail to address the Emmanuel church in Coloma.[48]

George Johnson recorded in his notes on Coloma that Oscar Osborn had attempted to deed the property to Trustees of Emmanuel Episcopal Church but was deemed illegal.[49]

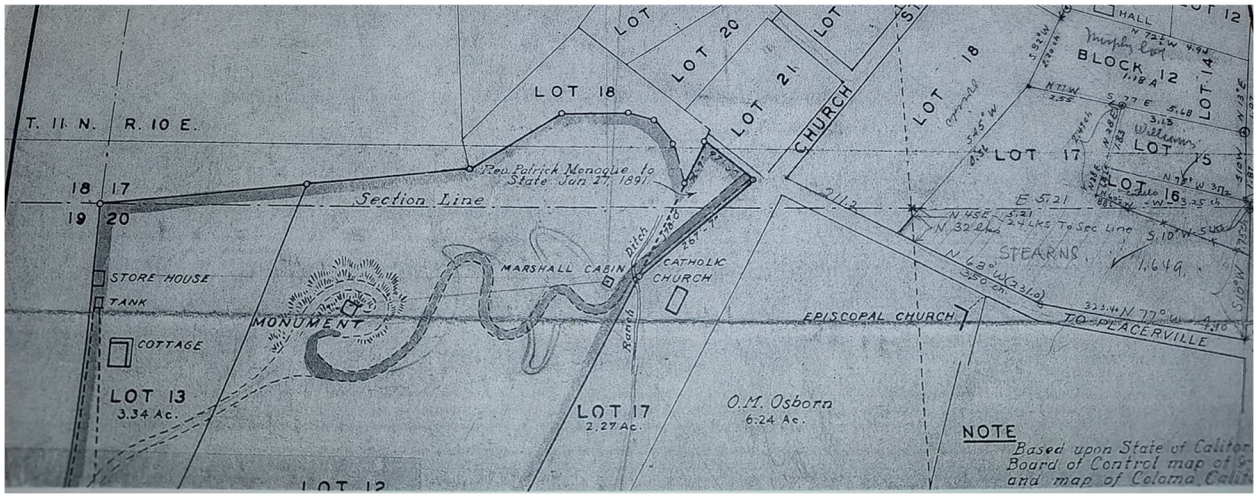


Afterwards Chalmers go the place and raised grapes on it. After the townsite of Coloma was surveyed and lots deeded to occupants, the Episcopal Church also fell to Chalmers by default, after 1873. Many years after Osborn deeded church and lot to J. Price, A. Mahler and Thomas, a trustees which deed was held to be illegal. In 1921, Mrs. Ella Norris deeded the church to the Methodists who who still own it. Another part of the property is the lot occupied by the Thos.

See footnote 35 for the entire page.

No official records of this transaction have been located; however, the Mountain Democrat reports on March 19, 1898, reports “O.W. Osborne was in Placerville at the Courthouse the first of the week.” This being two weeks prior to the Chancellor’s report during the Convocation in Santa Rosa relating to the Coloma church property. [50]

Oscar’s only property in Coloma were those that he had purchased from the Stockton Building and Loan, which included lots 14 & 15 in block 7, previously owned by Robert Chalmers.



[51] *Bancroft* map showing Osborn property that includes the Emmanuel Church.

On May 13, 1901, Albert Norris purchased the old Chalmers property consisting of Lots 14 & 15, Block 7, which included the Emmanuel Episcopal Church from Oscar Osborn. The description of this property is identical to that of the land pervious described and owned by Robert Chalmers, and the Stockton Building and Loan Association.

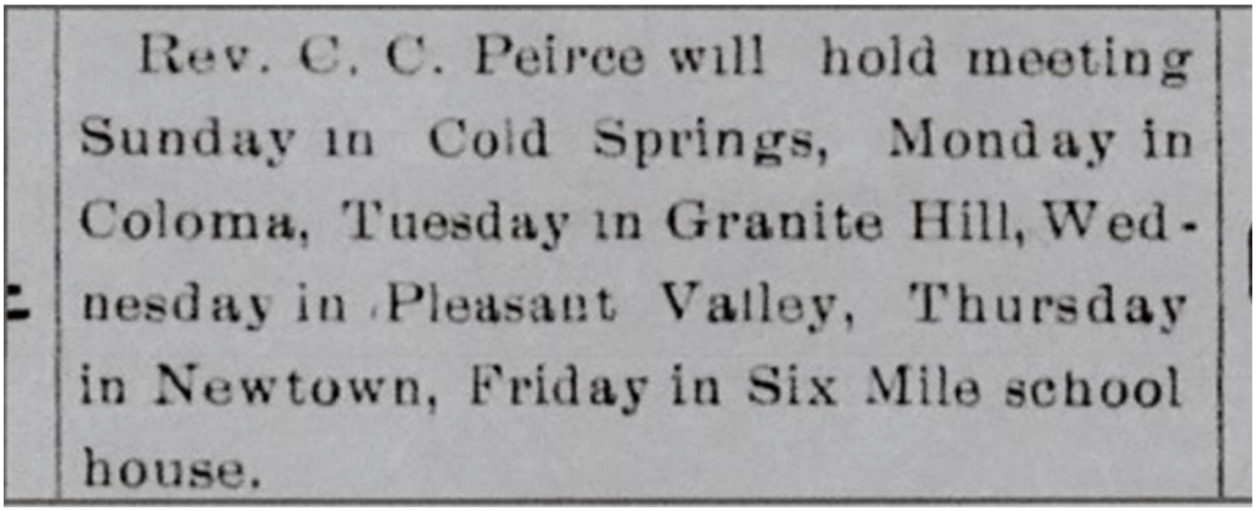
426

Oscar W. Osborn
Albert W. Norris

THIS INDENTURE, made this 13th day of May A.D. 1901 between Oscar W. Osborn of Coloma, in the County of El Dorado, State of California the party of the first part, and Albert W. Norris of said County & State the party of the second part,

WITNESSETH: That the said party of the first part, for and in consideration of the sum of One Hundred DOLLARS, Gold Coin of the United States of America, to him in hand paid by the said party of the second part, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, has granted, bargained and sold, conveyed and confirmed, and by these presents does grant, bargain and sell, convey and confirm, unto the said party of the second part, and to his heirs and assigns forever, all those certain lots, pieces or parcels of land, situate, lying and being in the County of El Dorado, State of California, and bounded and particularly described as follows, to-wit:

First: That certain lot of land situate in said County of El Dorado and bounded, as follows, to wit: Beginning at a stake & stone in the southerly line of the Street in the town of Coloma known as Church Street and stake being N 53° E 2.75 feet from the northeast corner of the Episcopal Church building in said town, running thence from said place of beginning S 37° E 100 feet to a stake, thence N 75° E 50 feet to a stake, thence S 15° E 100 feet to a stone post thence N 75° E 150 feet to a stone post thence being the line of fence running along the south end of a vacant lot to a stake marked X thence running along said line S 37° E 100 feet S 37° E 100 feet S 37° E 100 feet thence being said street and running S 15° E 50 feet to a stake one inch in diameter marked X on the East side line of the Northern most thence along said street line N 75° E 207 feet to the South side corner of the Catholic cemetery lot, thence along the boundary of said lot N 15° E 100 feet, N 15° E 100 feet, N 15° E 100 feet to the Southerly line of said Church Street thence along said southerly line S 75° E 270 feet to the place of beginning containing 1½ acres more or less together with the necessary thoroughfares thereto, being more particularly described as follows, to-wit: Commencing at the Northeast corner of the Episcopal Church lot on the Southerly side of Church Street in the town of Coloma, El Dorado County, State of California, and running thence North 53° East 2.75 feet to the place of beginning, thence South 37° East 100 feet, thence North 75° East 50 feet, thence South 15° East 100 feet, thence South 75° East 150 feet, thence North 15° East 100 feet, thence North 15° East 100 feet, thence North 15° East 100 feet to the Southerly line of said Church Street, thence along said Southerly line of said Church Street South 75° East 270 feet to the place of beginning containing 1½ acres more or less together with all


Rev. C. C. Peirce will hold meeting Sunday in Cold Springs, Monday in Coloma, Tuesday in Granite Hill, Wednesday in Pleasant Valley, Thursday in Newtown, Friday in Six Mile school house.

53

July 1901, Rev. Peirce to hold service at the Emmanuel Church in Coloma continuing his forty-year tradition.

After the death of Reverend C. C. Peirce in 1903 the Episcopalians did not provide a minister for years of 1905 to 1907. Sporadically there were some pastors from the Placerville Church of Our Savior Episcopal Church, gradually the El Dorado County circuit become abandoned including the Emmanuel Church in Coloma leaving only the Church of Our Savior.[54] Although the Episcopal Church may have sporadically used the Emmanuel Church after the death of Rev. C. C. Peirce in 1903 their use was not well documented.

With the death of Rev. Peirce and the lack of consistent pastors from the Methodist and Episcopal churches the Emmanuel was again in decay. In December of 1904, the Placerville chapter of the Native Sons of the Golden West voted to raise money and restore the semi- vacant Emmanuel Church, even with the recent Norris purchase of the Osborn properties the title of the property was still not well documented. The discussions regarding its historic value as a church and public venue as reported in the local newspaper.[55]

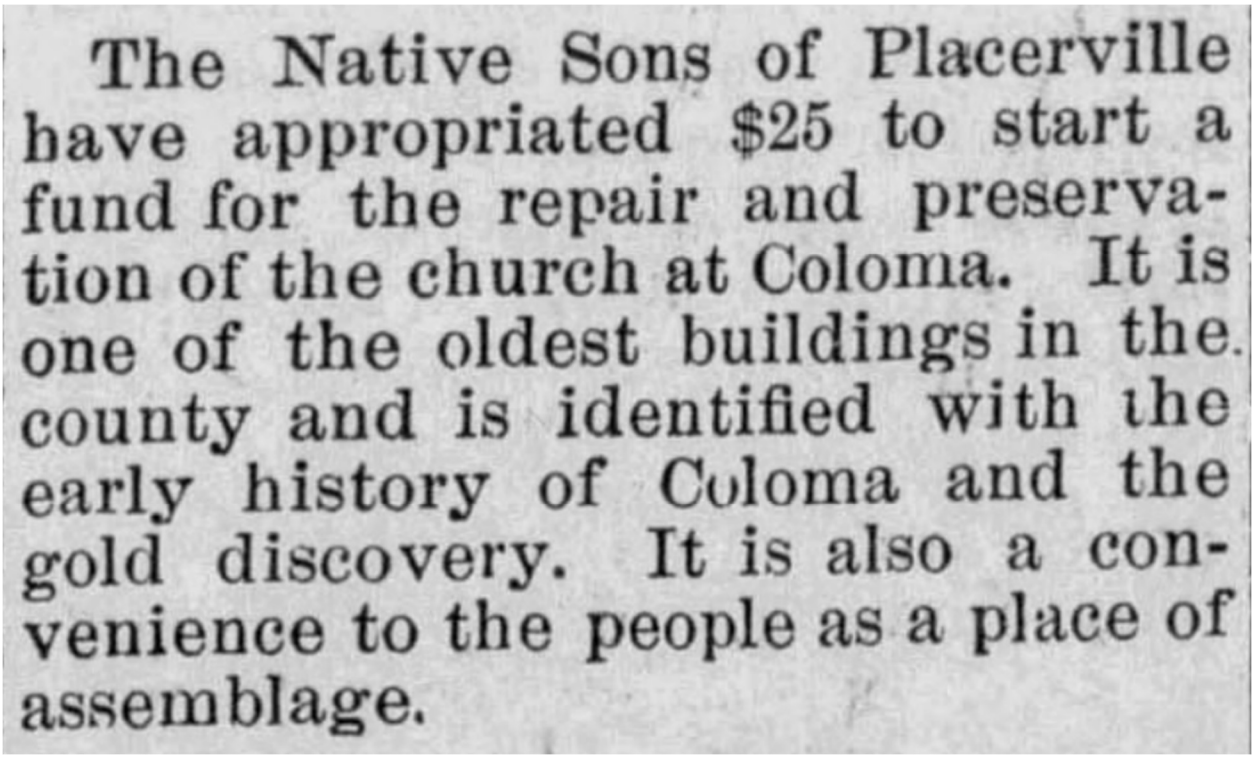
NATIVE SONS TAKE
STEPS IN THE MATTER

Twenty-five Dollars Voted By Them -- Technicalities Prevent Its Immediate Use.

A moment looking to the preservation of one of the old landmarks at Coloma—the old Protestant church—is on foot, and when legal matters are straightened out it is probable that a considerable fund will be raised for the repair and rehabilitation of the old edifice.

The church is one of the few original buildings of the town of Coloma which are standing today. Though originally built as an Episcopal Church it has been used by all of the Evangelical churches that have held services at Coloma. On account of its historical connection as well as its value to the present residents of Coloma, it is a desirable thing that it should be preserved.

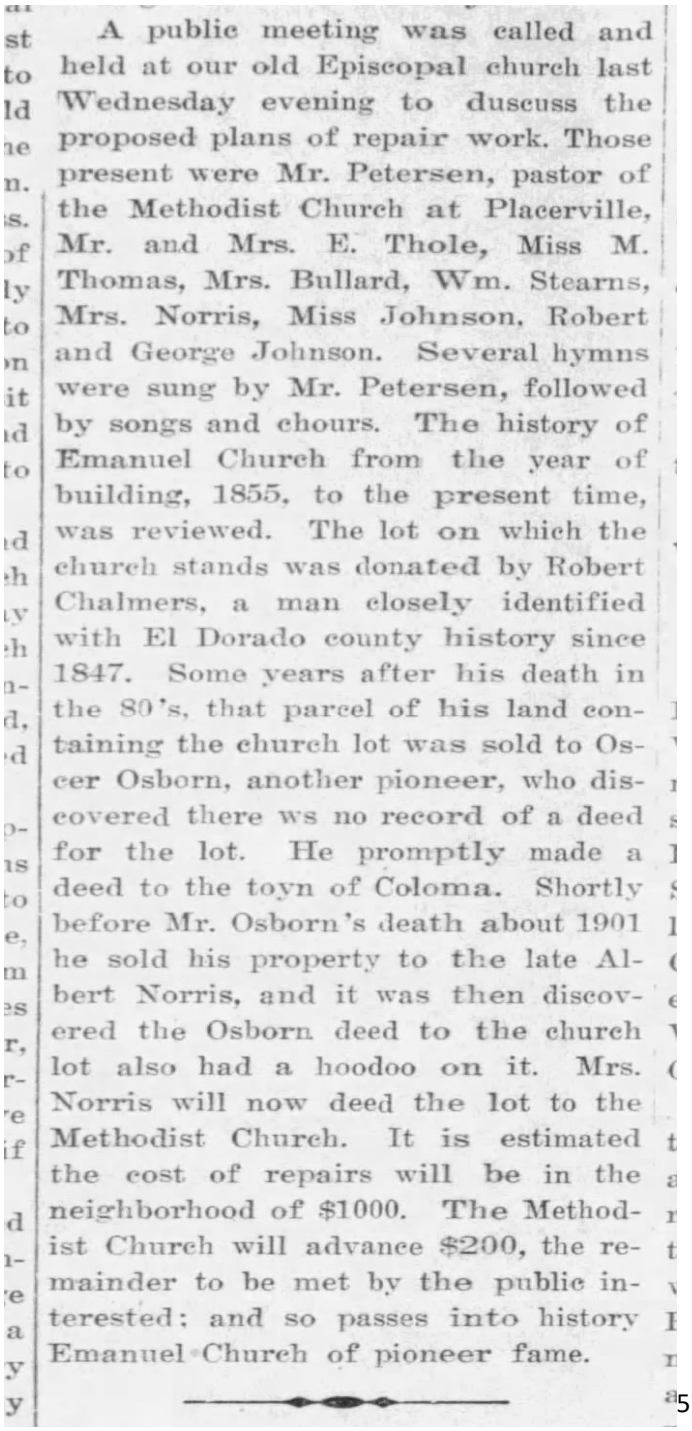
The matter was brought up before Native Sons at their last meeting and a donation of $25 was made with this end in view. Some legal points having relation to the title to the church have been discovered which will have to be adjusted before the money can be used.



The Native Sons of Placerville have appropriated $25 to start a fund for the repair and preservation of the church at Coloma. It is one of the oldest buildings in the county and is identified with the early history of Coloma and the gold discovery. It is also a convenience to the people as a place of assemblage.

Years later on March 11, 1921, Ella Norris called a public meeting, the topic was to discuss the donation and transfer of the Emmanuel Episcopal Church and lot to the Methodist Episcopal Church. Mentioned is the donation of the lot to the Episcopal Church by Robert Chalmers prior to the property acquisition by Oscar Osborn. Why the Rev. Peirce did not record this deed was never documented.

One interesting fact is that in 1896 the Bishop Wingfield did try to have the Reverend Peirce removed, amongst other charges, were not filing reports and remitting funds to the Diocese in San Francisco. His congregations from El Dorado County defended the Reverend with scheduled meetings of support, proclamations, and letters to the Diocese. The bishop was unsuccessful in removing Rev. Peirce.[56]

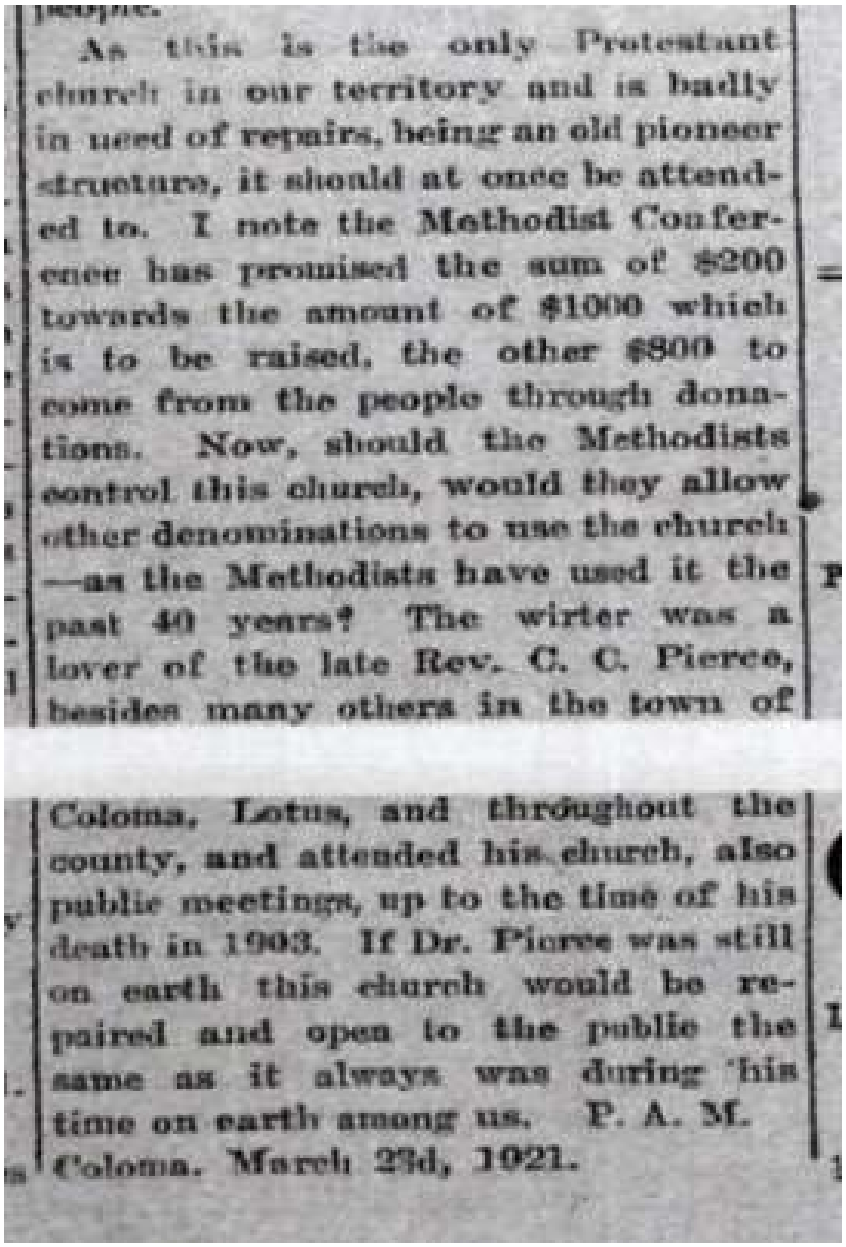


A public meeting was called and held at our old Episcopal church last Wednesday evening to duscuss the proposed plans of repair work. Those present were Mr. Petersen, pastor of the Methodist Church at Placerville, Mr. and Mrs. E. Thole, Miss M. Thomas, Mrs. Bullard, Wm. Stearns, Mrs. Norris, Miss Johnson, Robert and George Johnson. Several hymns were sung by Mr. Petersen, followed by songs and chours. The history of Emanuel Church from the year of building, 1855, to the present time, was reviewed. The lot on which the church stands was donated by Robert Chalmers, a man closely identified with El Dorado county history since 1847. Some years after his death in the 80's, that parcel of his land containing the church lot was sold to Oscer Osborn, another pioneer, who discovered there ws no record of a deed for the lot. He promptly made a deed to the toyn of Coloma. Shortly before Mr. Osborn's death about 1901 he sold his property to the late Albert Norris, and it was then discovered the Osborn deed to the church lot also had a hoodoo on it. Mrs. Norris will now deed the lot to the Methodist Church. It is estimated the cost of repairs will be in the neighborhood of $1000. The Methodist Church will advance $200, the remainder to be met by the public interested; and so passes into history Emanuel Church of pioneer fame.

57

Discussion of the donation of the Emmanuel Episcopal church lot by Robert Chalmers and the attempt of Oscar Osborn to also donate the lot to the Episcopal diocese.

A follow up to the article reporting the community meeting in Coloma to discuss the donation of the Emmanuel Episcopal Church to the Methodist Episcopal Church.



people.

As this is the only Protestant church in our territory and is badly in need of repairs, being an old pioneer structure, it should at once be attended to. I note the Methodist Conference has promised the sum of $200 towards the amount of $1000 which is to be raised, the other $800 to come from the people through donations. Now, should the Methodists control this church, would they allow other denominations to use the church—as the Methodists have used it the past 40 years? The writer was a lover of the late Rev. C. C. Pierce, besides many others in the town of Coloma, Lotus, and throughout the county, and attended his church, also public meetings, up to the time of his death in 1903. If Dr. Pierce was still on earth this church would be repaired and open to the public the same as it always was during his time on earth among us. P. A. M.

Coloma, March 23d, 1921.

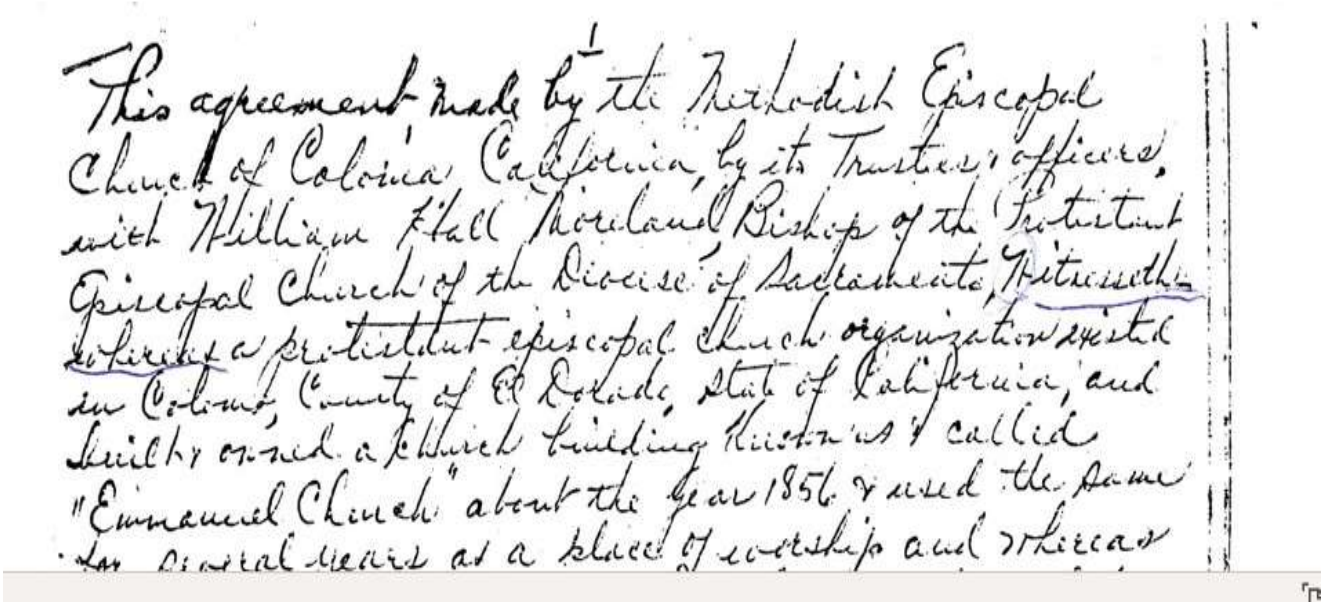
58

In a firsthand account of the Emmanuel Church's joint use by Episcopal and Methodist Episcopal Churches for over fifty years. The author

states the Rev. C.C Peirce served the Emmanuel Episcopal Church until 1903. The letter to the editor signed P.A.M., or Pearly Almirah Monroe a well-known and respected citizen of Coloma.

On April 12th, 1921, A resolution by Bishop Moreland of the Episcopal Church diocese of Sacramento acknowledging the joint use of the Emmanuel Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church for over fifty years, deeding the Emmanuel Episcopal Church building to the Methodist Episcopal Church with stipulations that the Episcopal Church be allowed periodic use of the building.

Partial page one of original transfer document,



This agreement made by the Methodist Episcopal Church of Coloma, California, by its Trustees, officers, with William Hall Moreland Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Sacramento, Witnesseth

59

Transcript of April 12th, 1921, Transfer of Emmanuel Church Building to Methodist Episcopal Church.

This agreement made by the Methodist Episcopal Church of Coloma California, by its Trustees, officers with William Hill Moreland, Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Sacramento witnesses whereof a protestant church organization existed in Coloma, County of El Dorado, State of California, and built a church building known and called the "Emmanuel Church" about the year 1856 an used the same building for several years as a place of worship and whereas later the county seat was moved away from Coloma and the local membership of said church become reduced in numbers & scattered, with offering that said church had been constructed on public land of the United States & later the title of said church lot being acquired by private individuals, and whereas by common consent said church building was used by the citizens of Coloma as a public hall, and a place of worship by various denominations & mainly by the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church for approximately fifty years, the Episcopal Minister also officiated in said church occasionally ; and whereas said church building became much dilapidated and greatly out of repair and it became necessary that said building be restored and improved and made fit for use and said Methodist Episcopal denominations of Coloma being willing to undertake the restoration of said church bringing it to its early day conditions as near as may be with the assistance of said friends of old historic church building on condition that the legal title to said church building and the lot of land on which it stands be conveyed to said Methodist Episcopal Church or trustee or proper officers of said church in Coloma California and in pursuance of said common purpose. And by common consent the said church building and the lot of land on which it stands was on the 12th day of April 1921, conveyed by deed to said Methodist Episcopal Church of

Coloma, California by Ella M. Norris, then owing the legal title to the land on which said church building stands and where said Methodist Episcopal Church of Coloma with its trustees and officers recognizing the original builders of said church under Bishop Kip of California and his successors in office for the Diocese of Sacramento, Bishop William Hall Moreland of the Protestant Episcopal church and its members as having an earned affection for the old historic church and also recalling the long continuous and free use of said church building as a house of worship for many years and said church and its trustees and officers being desirous of showing our equitable spirit to said Bishop Moreland and his successors in office to the extent that the services of the Protestant Episcopal church may be conducted occasionally in said old Coloma church herein referred to; now therefore in consideration of the forgoing premises and the preferred assistance of said Bishop Moreland to aid in the restoration of said church building by lecture and religious services and by other financial aid of himself and friends towards said restoration fund. It is hereby stipulated and agreed that by the Methodist Episcopal church of Coloma, California, by its trustees and officers holding title and control of said church building and their successors in office that Bishop William Hall Moreland , and his successors in office of the Protestant Episcopal church of Diocese of Sacramento and other Episcopal Ministers as he may recommend or appoint may and shall have the right occasionally to hold services in the old church above described when not in use by the present owners of said church building by giving two weeks' notice of a desire to hold such services to the proper officers or trustees of said Methodist Episcopal church. In witness where of we have caused to be signed here to the owners of said church building by its trustees and officers and our true names as trustees and officers of said church individually, this 16th day of May A.D. 1921.

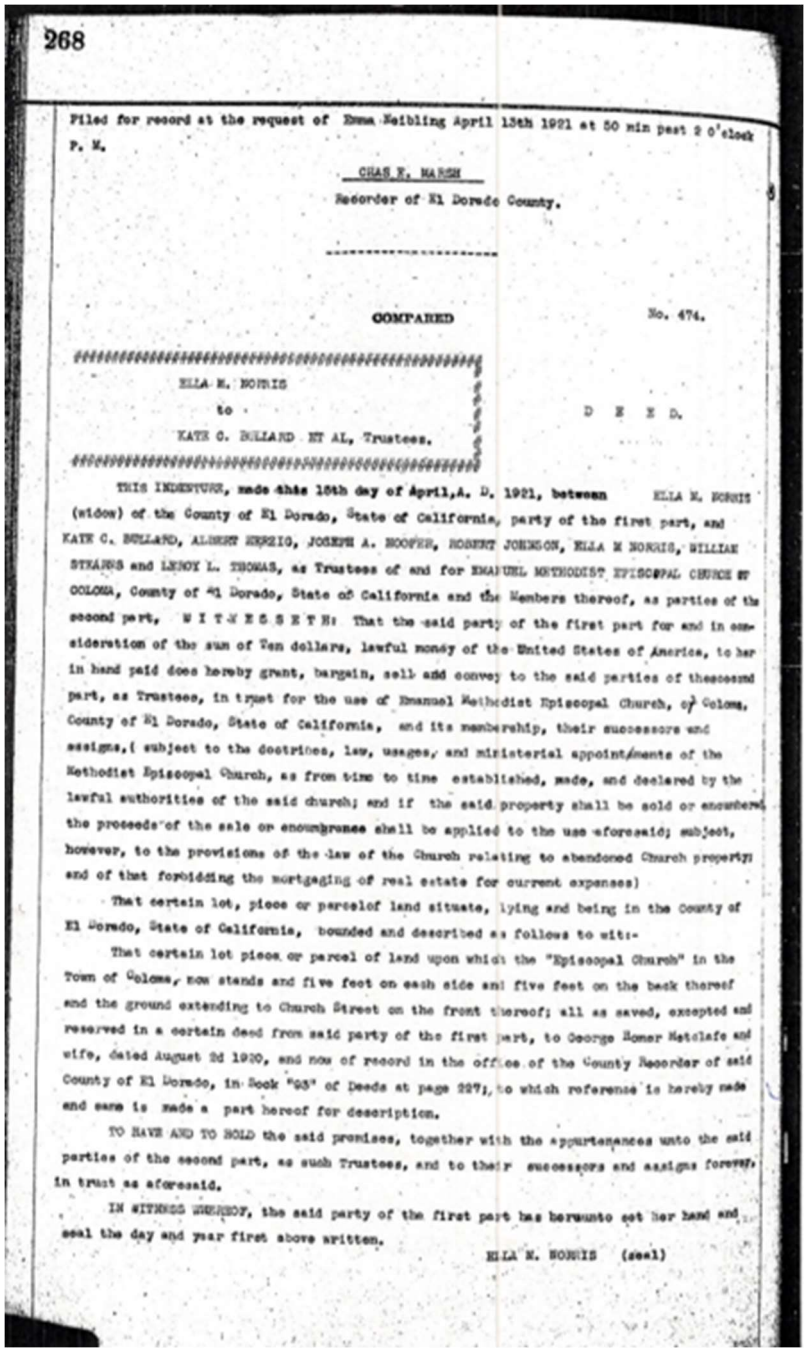
Emmanuel Methodist Episcopal church of Coloma – by Kate C Bullard, Ella M. Norris, Albert Herzig, Joseph Hooper, Robt. Johnson, Leroy Thomas, N. N. Stearns Trustees.

State of California, County of El Dorado

On this day, 16th day of May 1921 before me – Chas A. Rasmusson, a Notary Public in and for the County of El Dorado personally appeared.

Kate C. Bullard, Ella M. Norris, Albert Herzig, Joseph Hooper, Robt. Johnson, Leroy Thomas, N. N. Stearns known to me the persons whose names as subscribed to the within instrument and they duly acknowledged to me that they executed the same. In witness I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my official seal at my office in said County of El Dorado the day and year in this certificate first above written. Chas. A. Rasmusson Notary Public in and for the County of El Dorado, State of California My Commission expires Dec. 28, 1924.

On April 14, 1921, the Emmanuel Episcopal church lot as a portion of Lot 14 Block 7 was deeded by Mrs. Norris the Methodist Episcopal Church as recorded in the El Dorado County recorder books of deeds.



268

Filed for record at the request of Emma Neibling April 15th 1921 at 50 min past 2 o'clock P. M.

CHAS. F. MARSH

Recorder of El Dorado County.

COMPARED

No. 474.

ELLA M. MORRIS

to

KATE C. BULLARD ET AL, Trustees.

D E E D.

THIS INDENTURE, made this 15th day of April, A. D. 1921, between ELLA M. MORRIS (widow) of the County of El Dorado, State of California, party of the first part, and KATE C. BULLARD, ALBERT HERZIG, JOSEPH A. HOOPER, ROBERT JOHNSON, ELLA M MORRIS, WILLIAM STRAUSS and LENOY L. THOMAS, as Trustees of and for EMANUEL METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF COLOMA, County of El Dorado, State of California and the Members thereof, as parties of the second part, W I T N E S S E T H: That the said party of the first part for and in consideration of the sum of Ten dollars, lawful money of the United States of America, to her in hand paid does hereby grant, bargain, sell and convey to the said parties of the second part, as Trustees, in trust for the use of Emanuel Methodist Episcopal Church, of Coloma, County of El Dorado, State of California, and its membership, their successors and assigns, (subject to the doctrines, law, usages, and ministerial appointments of the Methodist Episcopal Church, as from time to time established, made, and declared by the lawful authorities of the said church; and if the said property shall be sold or encumbered the proceeds of the sale or encumbrance shall be applied to the use aforesaid; subject, however, to the provisions of the law of the Church relating to abandoned Church property and of that forbidding the mortgaging of real estate for current expenses)

That certain lot, piece or parcelof land situate, lying and being in the County of El Dorado, State of California, bounded and described as follows to wit:-

That certain lot piece or parcel of land upon which the "Episcopal Church" in the Town of Coloma, now stands and five feet on each side and five feet on the back thereof and the ground extending to Church Street on the front thereof; all as saved, excepted and reserved in a certain deed from said party of the first part, to George Homer Hatclafe and wife, dated August 2d 1920, and now of record in the office of the County Recorder of said County of El Dorado, in Book "93" of Deeds at page 227, to which reference is hereby made and same is made a part hereof for description.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the said premises, together with the appurtenances unto the said parties of the second part, as such Trustees, and to their successors and assigns forever, in trust as aforesaid.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the said party of the first part has hereunto set her hand and seal the day and year first above written.

ELLA M. MORRIS (seal)

60

The 1921 donation of the Emmanuel Episcopal Church and lot to the Methodist Episcopal Church generated much excitement in the community, raising funds[61] for the repairs and for the 1922 celebratory events that were held with participants attending from throughout the state. During the celebrations, the Reverend C.C. Pierce was celebrated

for his forty plus years of service in Coloma to the Emmanuel Episcopal Church as well as the Methodist preachers who also used the Emmanuel Church since 1870.

During the 1921 property transfer the Emmanuel Episcopal Church name was changed to the Emmanuel Methodist Episcopal Church.

1921 May 16, the church building becomes the property of the Methodists, who in that year made extensive improvements. Since then, only the Methodists have held services there, the Federated Church of Placerville had furnished ministers. Will O. Upton.[62]

Regardless of the ownership status of the Emmanuel Episcopal church, the church building remained in use by the Episcopal Church under Rev. C.C. Peirce for over forty years from 1861 until his death in 1903 with a shared use by the Methodist Episcopal church from 1870 until the 1921 transfer from Emmanual Episcopal Church to the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The following newspaper articles are but a few that appeared statewide celebrating the transfer and partial reconstruction of the Emmanuel Church in Coloma. A search of the online California Digital Newspaper Collection yields dozens of reports of planning, repairs, and of dedication.

Benefit at Coloma For Church Building

Coloma residents and members of the Methodist congregation are busily arranging a benefit for a repair fund for the church building. Built in 1854 and thereby so closely connected in sentiment with the stirring "days of '49," it is of historic value and should be preserved as such, besides the fact that it is the only protestant church in a large part of the county. Built for Episcopal occupancy, it has at this time become the property of the Methodist Episcopal denomination and plans for restoration call for exterior and interior work as near the original architectural style as possible. Rev. P. E. Petersen of Placerville, is the pastor; Mrs. A. W. Morris, treasurer of repair fund, and Robert Johnson, chairman of committee on repairs, and these with other local workers would be glad to receive subscriptions to add to the proceeds of the benefit on April 1, 1921.

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63

Window In Oldest Wood Churc In California Will Be Dedicate

'49 Services to Be Conducted in Churches at Capital

"Parade of Beards" Big Feature of Events Yesterday

SACRAMENTO, May 27.—Residents of Sacramento, and visitors, will leave by automobile tomorrow morning for Coloma, where gold was first discovered, to participate in one of the final incidents of the celebration of the Days of '49—dedication by Bishop William H. Moreland of a window in the oldest wooden church in California.

The window is a memorial to Rev. C. C. Pierce, who traveled over El Dorado county for more than 40 years as a missionary. The church is the old Emanuel Protestant Episcopal church, erected in 1854 and used by the Episcopal church from 1854 to 1910. The structure has been used by the Methodist church since 1870.

Other services will be held in Sacramento churches.

Attractions at the Mining Town

64

Pioneer Coloma Church Again Is Consecrated

* *

Two Congregations Now Make Use of Edifice

* *

Oldtimers Tell of Early Days of Worship

A fine tribute to Rev. Charles C. Pierce, who for 42 years was a missionary in El Dorado county, beloved by all with whom he came in contact, was paid by both bishops. At the conclusion of the service an offering was taken in an old mining pan, the proceeds of which are to be used in the construction of a memorial window in the church for the beloved pastor.

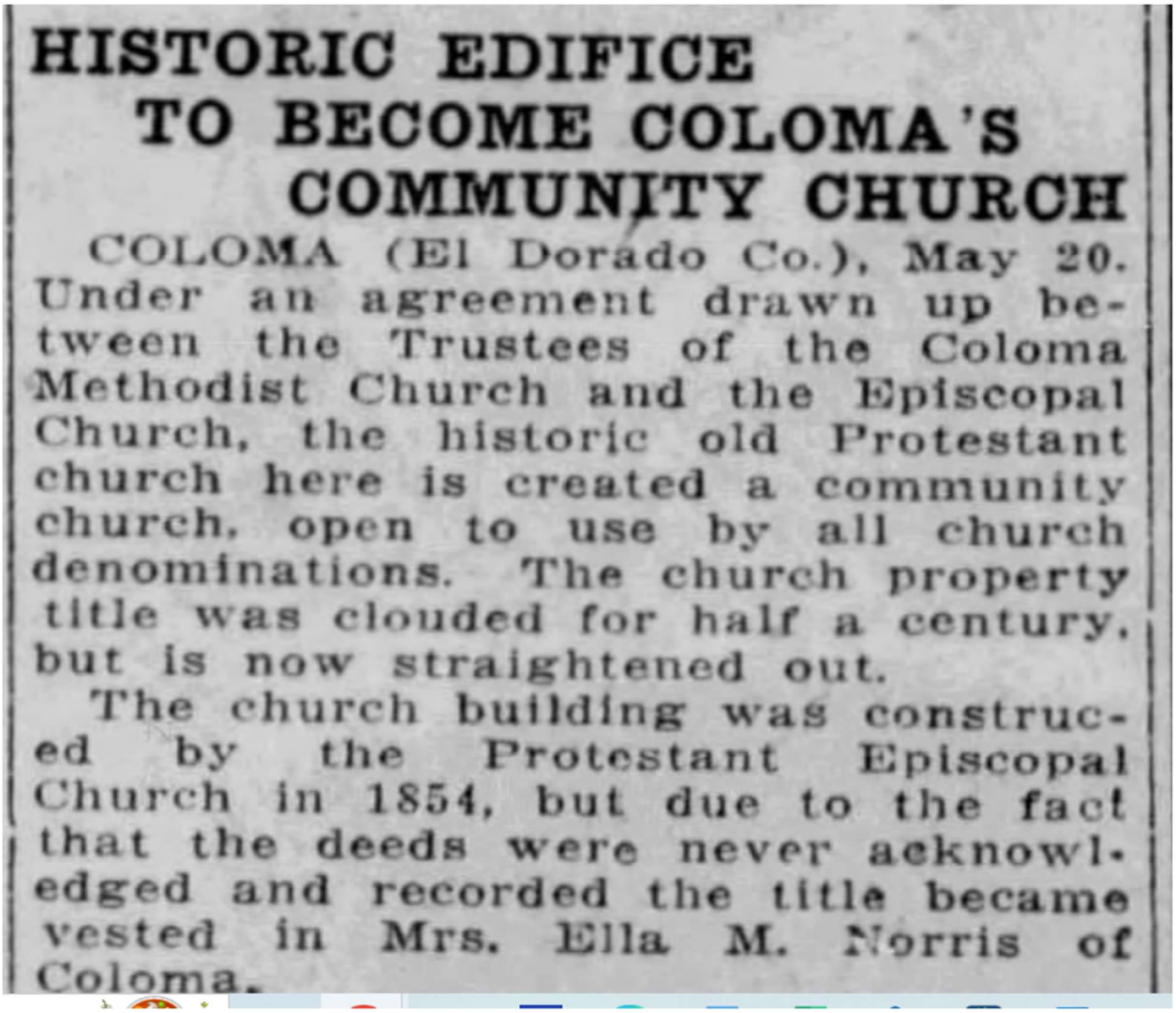
TWO CHURCHES LAUDED.

Rev. Dawson of the Methodist church of Placerville was present and made a short talk, praising the spirit which permitted both congregations to use the church.

Entertainment for the visitors was furnished wholly by the residents of the little town. A committee consisting of the following had charge of entertainment and refreshments:

65

The speech by the Reverend Dawson of the Placerville Methodist Church gave a talk on the joint use of the Emmanuel church by the Methodists and Episcopals.



HISTORIC EDIFICE TO BECOME COLOMA'S COMMUNITY CHURCH

COLOMA (El Dorado Co.), May 20. Under an agreement drawn up between the Trustees of the Coloma Methodist Church and the Episcopal Church, the historic old Protestant church here is created a community church, open to use by all church denominations. The church property title was clouded for half a century, but is now straightened out.

The church building was construced by the Protestant Episcopal Church in 1854, but due to the fact that the deeds were never acknowledged and recorded the title became vested in Mrs. Ella M. Norris of Coloma.

66

The Emmanuel church to become a Community church used by all.

Reverend C. C. Peirce preached at the Emmanuel from 1861 to 1903, a span of over 42 years.

The Emmanuel Episcopal church was used by the Episcopal diocese from 1854 to 1910. The Methodist Episcopal Church worshipped in the Emmanuel beginning in 1870.

Beginning in 1914 the Federated Church of Placerville, under the Rev. John Winkley supplied Methodist various ministers for the Coloma Emmanuel church as there were no resident ministers.

After the Rev. Winkley moved on the Rev. Rex Barron alternated Methodist services between Placerville and Coloma until sometime after 1940.

In 1948 the January 25th edition of the Oakland Tribune, in preparation for the Coloma Gold Discovery Centennial Celebration, published an article written by the Rev. John Winkley who had served as the Methodist preacher for the Placerville Circuit. In the article the Reverend Winkley describes the history of the Emmanuel Church.

Coloma Church

While all eyes are turned to Coloma it is distinctly in order to hear from one who preached there some years ago and has intimate knowledge of the place as it then was. Says John W. Winkley: "While I was pastor of the old Pioneer Methodist Church of Placerville more than 30 years ago, I also had under my care the old Pioneer Methodist Church of Coloma. This Coloma church was probably the first church of any kind to be organized in the mining country. In June of 1849 the Rev. William Roberts, superintendent of the Oregon and California Mission of the Methodist Church, in company with Rev. Elihu Anthony and Silas Bennett, went to Coloma and held services there among the miners. Dr. Roberts found a group of Methodist people in the new community and proceeded to organize a church, appointing Rev. Elihu Anthony as pastor, and Silas Bennett as 'class leader.' Anthony and Silas Bennett as 'class leader.' Anthony and Bennett remained at Coloma after the departure of Dr. Roberts, earning their living by working in the gold mines. This Coloma church soon became one of the strong appointments of the pioneer Methodist Conference in California. Among its early pastors were some of the leading ministers of the church, such as for instance—Dr. A. S. Gibbons, twice president of the College of the Pacific, and for 12 years a distinguished professor in Ohio State University. Gibbons was at Coloma in 1856. One of the notable members of this little Coloma church in the decade of 1870-1880, was a schoolteacher, Edwin Markham, who joined this Methdist Church, while teaching school in the town. Later he became famous for his poem 'The Man With the Hoe.' In my pastoral calling in Coloma, I visited with a litle old lady who was a neighbor of Markham's in that early day, and who recalled many sayings and doings of the poet. Among my Coloma and Placerville

friends was a wandering preacher who had a gravel claim on the river near Coloma. Here he panned out gold and did well with it too. As soon as his pile was sufficient for his needs, he would start on a missionary tour of the hills, holding religious services in out-of-the-way places. When his funds were exhausted, he returned to his gravel bar for more gold dust. He said there was still lots of gold along the river, if you knew where to find it. The Coloma church building of my day and since has an interesting story. As the town declined along the years, the churches failed and were abandoned, all but the Methodist. Among the other churches was the Emanuel Episcopal Church. When the Methodist building was lost years ago, the Episcopal authorities granted the Methodists the privilege of using their old structure and Methodist services and Sunday School were maintained in it. By some strange arrangement at the founding of the Episcopal Church, the ground on which the building stood remained in private hands. The heirs then (at the time of rehabilitation of the structure) deeded the property over to the Methodist congregation. Thus Emanuel Episcopal Church of old Coloma became Emanuel Methodist Church. Today it stands clean and white and stately on one of the upper streets of the old town."

1

Explanation of the Episcopal church allowing the Methodists joint use of the Emmanuel (1870) and the 1921 transfer to the Methodists.

In another 1954 article from the *Oakland Tribune's* "The Knave" section, written by John Winkley past Pastor of the Placerville Methodist Episcopal (now Federated) church from 1916-1921. In the article he states the Episcopalians gave up their work and transferred the Church to the Methodist's as reported elsewhere during the 1921 public meeting that was held to discuss the donation of the Emmanuel Church to the Methodists.[1]

The rebuilding of the Emmanuel Church was started in May 1921 with the noted carpenter Philias Cote of Placerville as head carpenter. The completion was in October of the same year.[2]

Final costs for the rebuilding of the Emmanuel Church by the Methodists were reported as costing a little more than $1000.00. The Mountain Democrat and Placerville times posted the treasurers report from Ella Norris listing the donors that gave to the fund with a comprehensive accounting of income and expenditures.[3]

COLOMA CHURCH

Treasurer's Report

The committee in charge of repairs on Emmanuel M. E. Church of Coloma beg to submit the following report of cash receipts and expenditures to date, and also to take this means of thanking all who contributed in any way, whether by cash, donated labor, hauling, lumber or other material. Especial thanks are extended to Rev. P. E. Petersen, to whose untiring efforts are due the undertaking and accomplishing of this good work.

To those who may have wished to contribute toward the repairs of this sacred old landmark and have not done so, we would say the opportunity is still open, as interior painting and a few minor improvements are contemplated.

Receipts

Bal from old fund)1905)	$ 29.93
Net proceeds from Oct. and Nov. Socials (1920)	100.00
Net proceeds from April socials (1921)	75.35
Silk quilt given by Mrs. Rose Ashley	49.75
Lecture by Bishop Moreland ..	27.60
Scaffold lumber sold to R. Johnson	14.25
Rev. C. R. Richardson, Dist. Supt. M. E. Church	225.00
Mrs. Kate C. Bullard	100.00
Mrs. Thos. Hall	35.00
W. N. Stearns	30.00
A. J. Mahler	25.00
Mrs. Ella M. Norris	25.00
John E. Sexton	20.00
A. S. Fox	20.00

The following gave $10 each: Albert Herzig, LeRoy Thomas, El Dorado County Bank, Leonard Thomas, Chas. A. Rasmusson, John J. Bayne, Andrew Marchini, John McKay, Walter Van Guilder.

The following gave $5 each: Mrs. Bertha Nixon, Frank Ashley, Alex Chalmers, Mrs. Etta Chalmers Adams, W. C. Deister, R. F. Galleher, W. B. Lardner, Elmer S. Colwell, Mrs. E. Killough, Mrs. Ollie Thomas, Mrs. H. W. Batchelder, J. Papaini and family, B. Veerkamp, G. H. Metcalfe, Martin Grother, A. E. Stolzfus, Mrs. M. S. Endriss, Miss Lizzie Endriss, Mrs. Laura E. Lovett, Fred A. Rasmusson, Albert P. Johnson, Mrs. Mamie Mahler, L. J. Hopkins, Mrs. Carver, James Balderston, Mrs. Mary Durnin, Coloma Woman's Club, Mrs. L. E. Crawford, Mrs. Julia Johnson, Miss Nancy Hall. M

Miss Mamie V. Thomas, $2.50.

Total receipts, $1,020.38.

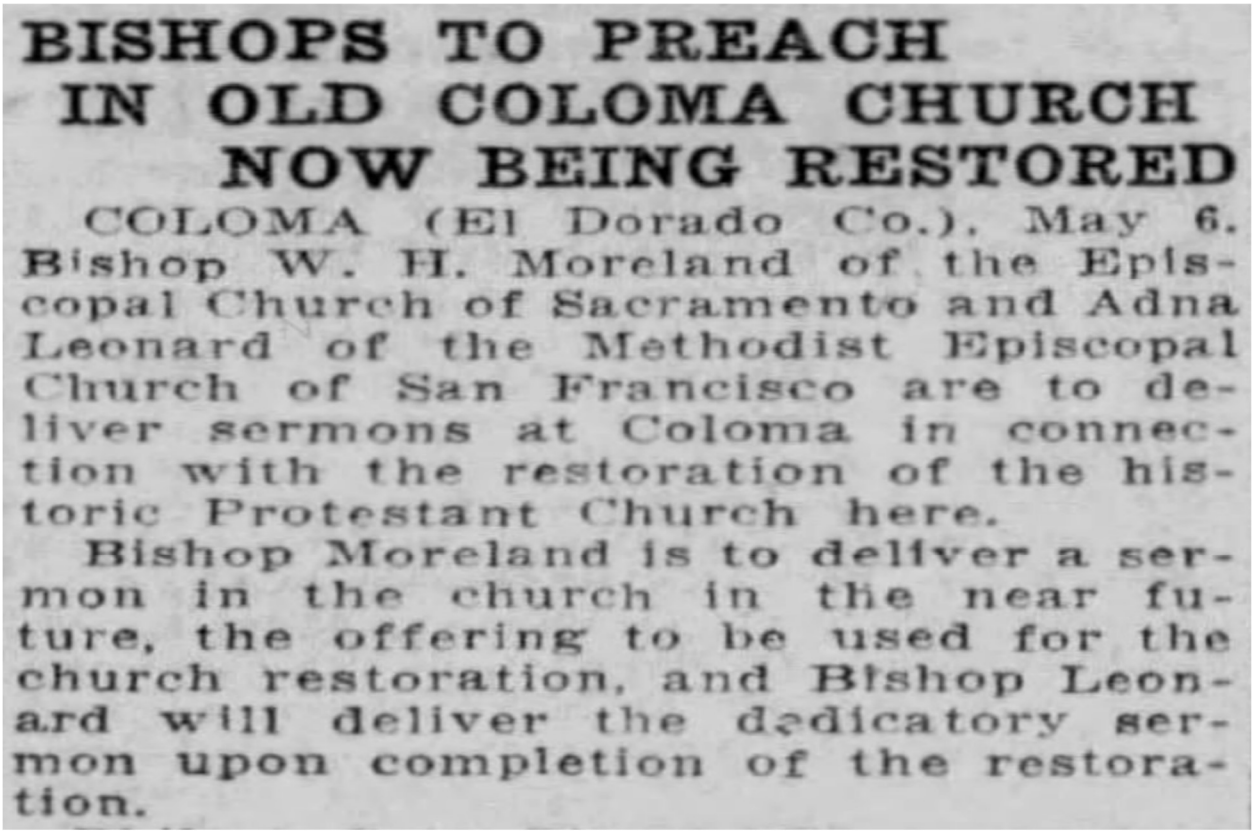
Disbursements

Paint and freight an same ...	$ 93.30
Albush & Molinari, haul. lmbr	10.00
Jesse Cook, carpenter work ..	112.00
H. C. Marsh, same	98.00
P. Cote, same	19.25
Melvin Gallagher, haul. lmbr.	5.00
E. L. Alderson, roofing	233.86
Fox Bros., glass, putty, etc. ..	23.55
J. B. Blair Lumber Co.	423.00
Tottal disbursements	$1,017.96
Bal. on hand	$ 2.42

ELLA M. NORRIS, Treas.

Coloma, Cal., Oct. 8, 1921.

To honor the transfer of the Emmanuel church to the Methodists Both Bishop Nichols and Leonard held a dedication ceremony in Coloma.



BISHOPS TO PREACH IN OLD COLOMA CHURCH NOW BEING RESTORED

COLOMA (El Dorado Co.), May 6. Bishop W. H. Moreland of the Episcopal Church of Sacramento and Adna Leonard of the Methodist Episcopal Church of San Francisco are to deliver sermons at Coloma in connection with the restoration of the historic Protestant Church here.

Bishop Moreland is to deliver a sermon in the church in the near future, the offering to be used for the church restoration, and Bishop Leonard will deliver the dedicatory sermon upon completion of the restoration.

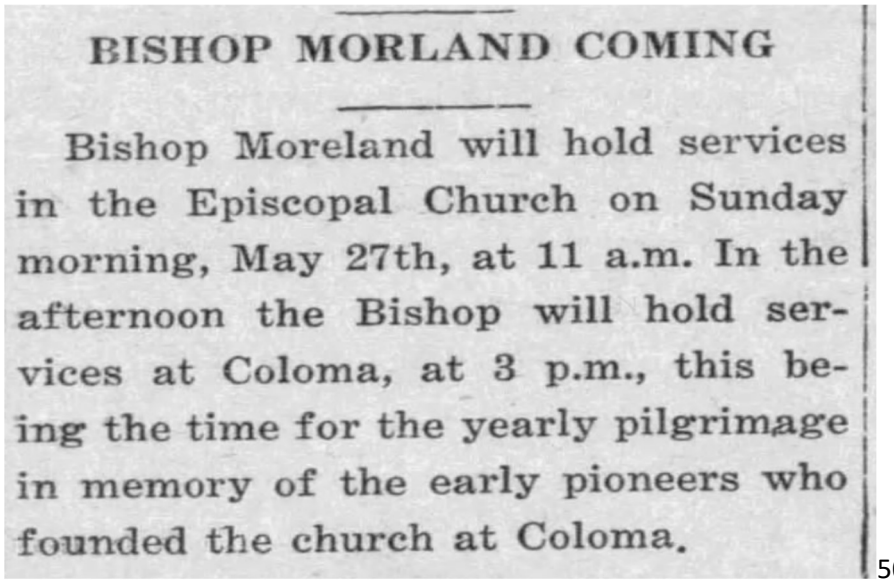
Phileas Cote, Placerville contractor, together with Jesse Cook of the same place, started the repair work on Thursday.

The church was constructed in 1853-54 and the restoration work will entail a large amount of repairs.

The church was constructed by the Episcopal Church in the early days, and was known as Emanuel Episcopal Church. It was used by the Episcopal Church until the year 1910, and has also been used by the Methodist Episcopal Church since 1870.

[4] The transfer and reconstruction of the Emmanuel church were well documented in the local newspapers.

In May 1923, the Bishop Moreland held special services in the Emmanuel Church as part of the yearly pilgrimage of the Episcopal Founders of the Emmanuel Church.



BISHOP MORLAND COMING

Bishop Moreland will hold services in the Episcopal Church on Sunday morning, May 27th, at 11 a.m. In the afternoon the Bishop will hold services at Coloma, at 3 p.m., this being the time for the yearly pilgrimage in memory of the early pioneers who founded the church at Coloma.

50

In 1939 the Methodist Episcopal Church, Methodist Episcopal Church South, and the Methodist Protestant Church merge to form the Methodist Church.[5]

January 29, 1939, marked the dedication of Native Sons of the Golden West's placing a bronze marker commemorating the Emmanuel Church and Rev. C. C. Peirce's (Peirce is spelled wrong on plaque) service to Coloma from 1861 till his death in 1903 a span of over forty years.

EMANUEL CHURCH
FOUNDED JAN 4, 1854 BY
RIGHT REV WM J. KIPP D D, BISHOP OF
THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF CALIFORNIA
IN MEMORY OF
REV C. C. PIERCE.
WHO MINISTERED TO HIS
CONGREGATION IN THIS CHURCH
FOR OVER FORTY YEARS.
DEDICATED BY
MARGUERITE PARLOR Nº 12,
NATIVE DAUGHTERS OF THE GOLDEN WEST
JAN 29 1939.
6

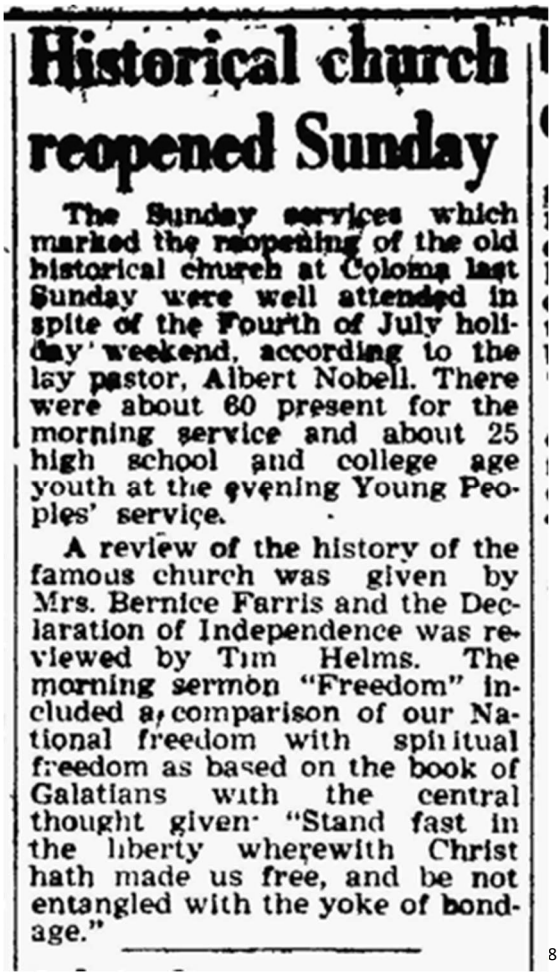
During 1946 there were no services at the Emmanuel Methodist church due to lack of a Pastor.

For the years 1950 - 5? The Emmanuel Church was rented by another church group as related by Steven de Haas.

In June 1950 Dr. Arch W. Sidders of the Church of Our Savior provided services at the Emmanuel to coincide with Native Daughters of the

Golden West monument dedication, marking the site of the gold discovery.[7]

In the spring of 1957, the Emmanuel Church was rented and revitalized by the Mother Lode Church under a lease agreement with the United Methodists. The first service was held on July 4th, 1957.



Historical church reopened Sunday

The Sunday services which marked the reopening of the old historical church at Coloma last Sunday were well attended in spite of the Fourth of July holiday weekend, according to the lay pastor, Albert Nobell. There were about 60 present for the morning service and about 25 high school and college age youth at the evening Young Peoples' service.

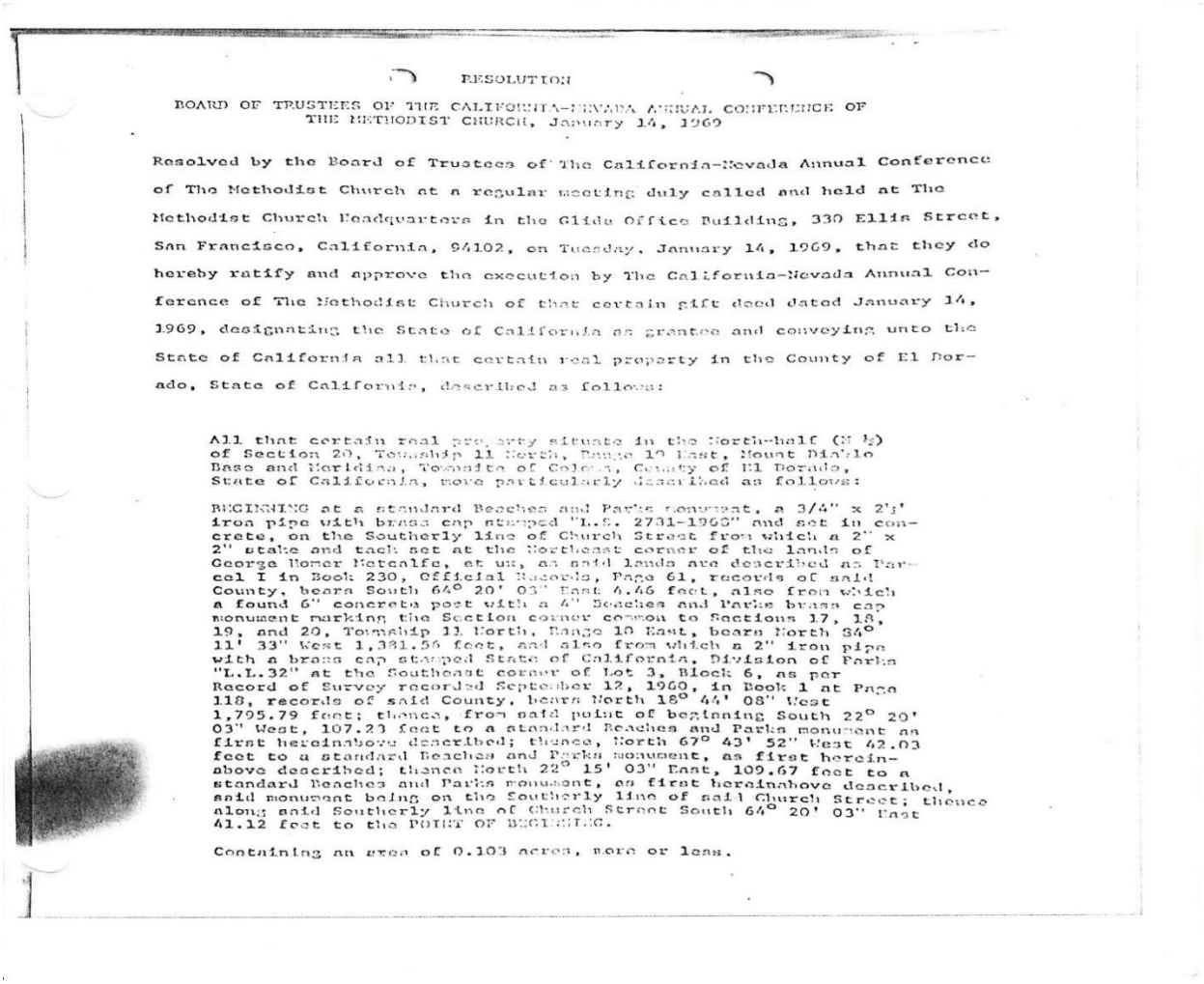
A review of the history of the famous church was given by Mrs. Bernice Farris and the Declaration of Independence was reviewed by Tim Helms. The morning sermon "Freedom" included a comparison of our National freedom with spiritual freedom as based on the book of Galatians with the central thought given "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled with the yoke of bondage."

[8]

On April 14, 1964, The Emmanuel Methodist Episcopal Church in Coloma was deeded to the Calif./ Nev. Methodist Church.

The Mother Lode Church in 1968 relocated to a new facility on Beach Court in Lotus, again leaving the Emmanuel vacant.

In 1968 Methodist Church merges with the Evangelical United Brethren to form the United Methodist Church.



RESOLUTION

BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE CALIFORNIA-NEVADA ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE METHODIST CHURCH, January 14, 1969

Resolved by the Board of Trustees of The California-Nevada Annual Conference of The Methodist Church at a regular meeting duly called and held at The Methodist Church Headquarters in the Glide Office Building, 330 Ellis Street, San Francisco, California, 94102, on Tuesday, January 14, 1969, that they do hereby ratify and approve the execution by The California-Nevada Annual Conference of The Methodist Church of that certain gift deed dated January 14, 1969, designating the State of California as grantee and conveying unto the State of California all that certain real property in the County of El Dorado, State of California, described as follows:

All that certain real property situate in the North-half (N ½) of Section 20, Township 11 North, Range 10 East, Mount Diablo Base and Meridian, Townsite of Coloma, County of El Dorado, State of California, more particularly described as follows:

BEGINNING at a standard Beaches and Parks monument, a 3/4" x 2½' iron pipe with brass cap stamped "L.S. 2731-1960" and set in concrete, on the Southerly line of Church Street from which a 2" x 2" stake and tack set at the Northeast corner of the lands of George Homer Metcalfe, et ux, as said lands are described as Parcel I in Book 230, Official Records, Page 61, records of said County, bears South 64° 20' 03" East 4.46 feet, also from which a found 6" concrete post with a 4" Beaches and Parks brass cap monument marking the Section corner common to Sections 17, 18, 19, and 20, Township 11 North, Range 10 East, bears North 34° 11' 33" West 1,381.56 feet, and also from which a 2" iron pipe with a brass cap stamped State of California, Division of Parks "L.L.32" at the Southeast corner of Lot 3, Block 6, as per Record of Survey recorded September 12, 1960, in Book 1 at Page 118, records of said County, bears North 18° 44' 08" West 1,795.79 feet; thence, from said point of beginning South 22° 20' 03" West, 107.23 feet to a standard Beaches and Parks monument as first hereinabove described; thence, North 67° 43' 52" West 42.03 feet to a standard Beaches and Parks monument, as first hereinabove described; thence North 22° 15' 03" East, 109.67 feet to a standard Beaches and Parks monument, as first hereinabove described, said monument being on the Southerly line of said Church Street; thence along said Southerly line of Church Street South 64° 20' 03" East 41.12 feet to the POINT OF BEGINNING.

Containing an area of 0.103 acres, more or less.

The resolution for the donation of the Emmanuel Methodist church to the State of California.

On April 30, 1969, A deed from Methodist Church Cal/Nev Conference and the Cal/Nev Conference Methodist Church trustees to the State of California, for the Emmanuel Church of Coloma to be included in the Marshal Gold Discovery State Historic Park. Source, El Dorado County Recorder.[9]

During the January 23, 1975, celebration of the 127th Gold Discovery celebration Pastor Albert Noble of the Mother Lode church in Lotus gave a sermon at the Emmanuel church, reading from the book "Moral Law" by Rev. MacDonald. "Ten Commandments of the Gold Fields of Coloma."

Sermon from early 1850's to be reviewed at historic church

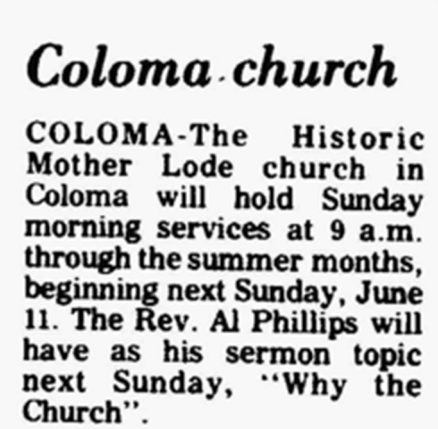
COLOMA--The Historic Mother Lode church in Coloma will hold its morning worship service in the Historic Episcopal Emmanual church at 9:30 a.m. Sunday, Jan. 26, the 127th Gold Discovery anniversary celebration.

Albert Nobell, pastor, will review a sermon on the Ten Commandments, a sermon which was actually preached in the Emmanual church in early 1850's by an Episcopalian missionary, the Rev. David F. MacDonald.

The sermon is entitled "Ten Commandments of the Gold Fields of Coloma." The book of sermons on the Ten Commandments authorized by MacDonald was published by James Anthony and company, printers Daily Union office in Sacramento in 1850's.

A printed notation in the back of the book states "These sermons were published to pay off the debt on the Coloma church His sermons curbed the drinking, fighting and gambling mining community."

10



Coloma church

COLOMA-The Historic Mother Lode church in Coloma will hold Sunday morning services at 9 a.m. through the summer months, beginning next Sunday, June 11. The Rev. Al Phillips will have as his sermon topic next Sunday, "Why the Church".

11

Newspapers record the Reverend Al Phillips as Pastor of the United Church of Christ meeting at the Emmanuel Church during the years of 1977-78. Little other information has been found. It is assumed that it was a lease from California State Parks. [12]

Since its inclusion into the park, the Emmanuel Church has been a popular venue for weddings and special events. In 2023 California State Parks began a total restoration and stabilization program of this pioneer church, completed in 2024. This project should ensure the Emmanuel church stands and serves the community for another 167 years.

13

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Chapter 4

Coloma Baptist Church

“The First Baptist Church of Refuge”

Coloma Baptist Church Timeline

1850

- Reverend Wheeler holds service three times in one day in a building without a roof.
- Reverend Prevaux is assigned to Coloma.

1851

- Reverend Prevaux returns to San Francisco.

1853

- The" First Baptist Church of Refuge" in Coloma has eighteen members but is need of a pastor.
- James Edward Barnes and his two brothers arrived in Coloma to mine for gold.

1854

- Reverend Richardson is listed as preaching in the Coloma/Uniontown circuit.

1855

- James Edward Barnes begins preaching to the Coloma / Uniontown circuit of the Baptist church.

1856

- Baptist Church members of Coloma fundraise to purchase the first floor of the Coloma I.O.O.F. Hall.

1857

- Bishop Wheeler ordains James Barnes.

1859

- Rev. Schuck dedicates the Uniontown Baptist church. The Coloma congregation begins to meet in the Uniontown Baptist Church abandoning the I.O.O.F. hall.

1866

- Only Uniontown and Placerville Baptist are the surviving Baptist churches in El Dorado County.
- Reverend Barnes leaves for Yolo County with no recorded replacement for the Uniontown church.

1896

- Death of Reverend James Barnes in Chico, CA.

The earliest record of the Coloma Baptist Church is recorded on June 22, 1850, when the Rev. Osgood C. Wheeler hold services three times during the day in a building without a roof. Shortly after the Rev. Wheeler's departure, the Rev. Prevaux was assigned to Coloma in August 1850 but leaves for San Francisco in January of 1851.[1]

2

The Reverend Wheeler

Wheeler's June 1850 letter to the American Home Mission Society in San Francisco describing the journey from San Francisco to Coloma.

A Forerunner Indeed

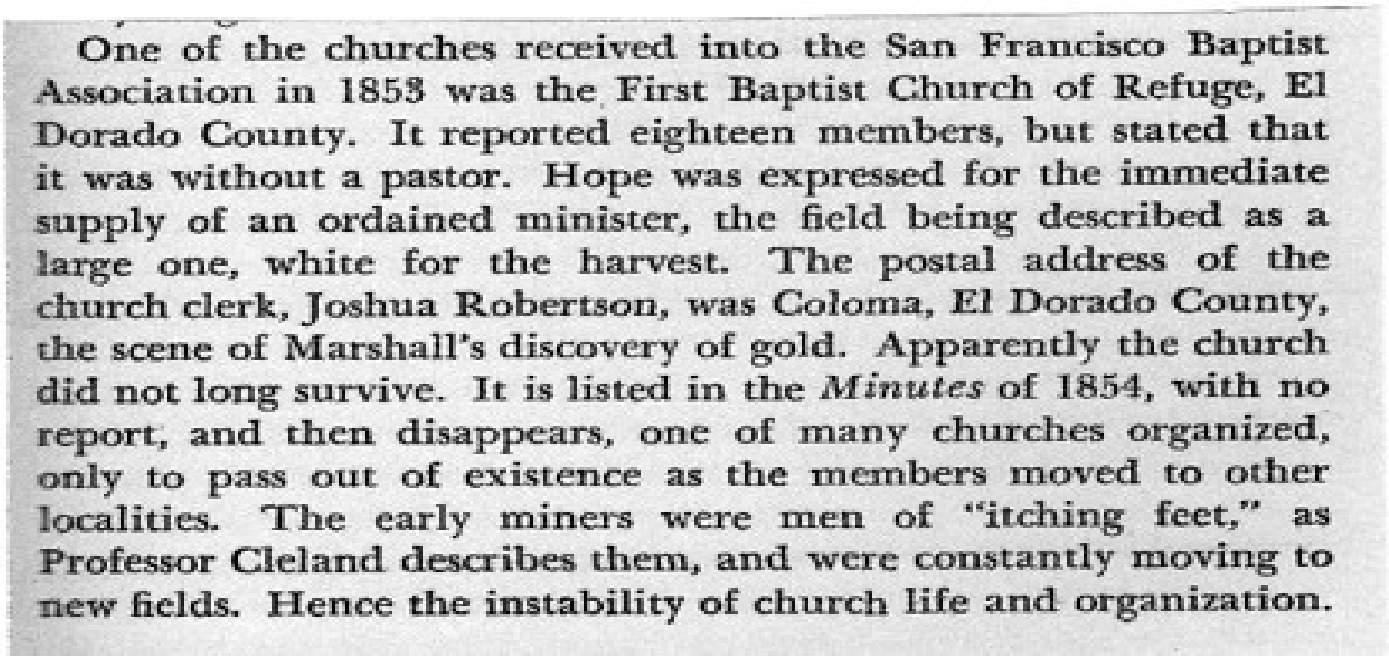
It has been noted that Wheeler not only explored the state for new fields, but actively prepared the way for men to occupy them. In addition to his preparatory work at San Jose and Sacramento, he made arrangements for Prevaux to serve at Coloma, the scene of the gold discovery.

On Saturday, June 22, 1850, Wheeler journeyed by stage from Sacramento to Coloma, and announced services for the next day. The congregation met in a building without a roof; "a good congregation was present in the morning, a better in the afternoon, and in the evening, (though a theatre had just opened) very much larger than the building would hold." At the close of the evening service Wheeler told the congregation that Prevaux and his wife were to arrive soon, and asked if the people would like to have them settle in Coloma. A vote was taken by rising. "And *such* a rising!!" declared Wheeler. "With such unanimity and such *spirit* I have seldom seen. I promised them the boon, dismissed the assembly, and received the hearty greetings of a good number of staunch citizens."[27]

Prevaux entered upon the work at Coloma in August, and it was the understanding of the Home Mission Society that he would remain there. However, in January Wheeler wrote that he had not found sufficient encouragement to remain. Coloma was in the gold diggings, unlike the other centers where churches had been established, and in the first flush of the search for gold it was almost impossible to establish permanent religious organizations in such places. There was little permanence of residence, many of the miners moved frequently, and when work was suspended on Sunday few of them were concerned with worship. Prevaux returned to San Francisco, which city became the center of his activity until 1859, when he returned East.

3

There was no Baptist Church building built in Coloma. However, reported to the San Francisco Baptist Association in 1853, the First Baptist Church of Refuge, El Dorado County reports eighteen members and need of a Pastor. This account was submitted by Joshua Robertson, Coloma.[4]



One of the churches received into the San Francisco Baptist Association in 1853 was the First Baptist Church of Refuge, El Dorado County. It reported eighteen members, but stated that it was without a pastor. Hope was expressed for the immediate supply of an ordained minister, the field being described as a large one, white for the harvest. The postal address of the church clerk, Joshua Robertson, was Coloma, El Dorado County, the scene of Marshall's discovery of gold. Apparently the church did not long survive. It is listed in the *Minutes* of 1854, with no report, and then disappears, one of many churches organized, only to pass out of existence as the members moved to other localities. The early miners were men of "itching feet," as Professor Cleland describes them, and were constantly moving to new fields. Hence the instability of church life and organization.

[5]

In March 1853 James Edward Barnes and his two brothers arrived in Coloma from Kentucky. They traveled first by ship to Panama, then overland through Panama to the Pacific, and then again ship bound for San Francisco. They were reported shipwrecked just out of the mouth of the Golden Gate. While no accounts have been found of the Barnes' rescue and arrival in San Francisco, we know that they traveled from San Francisco to Coloma seeking gold.[6]

7

The Reverend James Edwards Barnes

Of note to researchers,

Mrs. Lena J. Harlan, born in 1860 in Coloma was the daughter of the Rev. James Edwards Barnes. Mrs. Harlan was interviewed in 1938 by Will O. Upton author of the *Churches of El Dorado County California*. While the Upton's interview provides a good source of biographical information of the Barnes' family life in California, the official documents from the Baptist Archives dispute her stated dates and should be considered as accurate.

Sermon on the Saloon Bar

According to Mrs. Harlan, her dad arrived in Coloma about January of 1850 "At that time there was no building in which he could hold services. But a saloon-keeper came to his rescue and offered the use of his barroom for a meeting house. Hanging a sheet over the mirror back of the bar, the owner cleared off the bar, and, the minister mounting to the top of it, preached his first Coloma sermon to a congregation of miners and gamblers. And he afterward told his family that in his subsequent preaching he had never found more attentive listeners in church than at his first meeting in a saloon; and his audience donated freely when it came to the collection."

Upton says that, "In the middle 1850s Coloma Lodge No. 27, I.O.O.F. and the Baptists, jointly, built the Odd Fellows' Hall at Coloma, the lodge using the upstairs and the Baptists the lower floor ... In 1860 the Baptists built the church at Uniontown." Reverend James Edward Barnes served both the Coloma and Uniontown churches, until about 1870 or 1871.

8

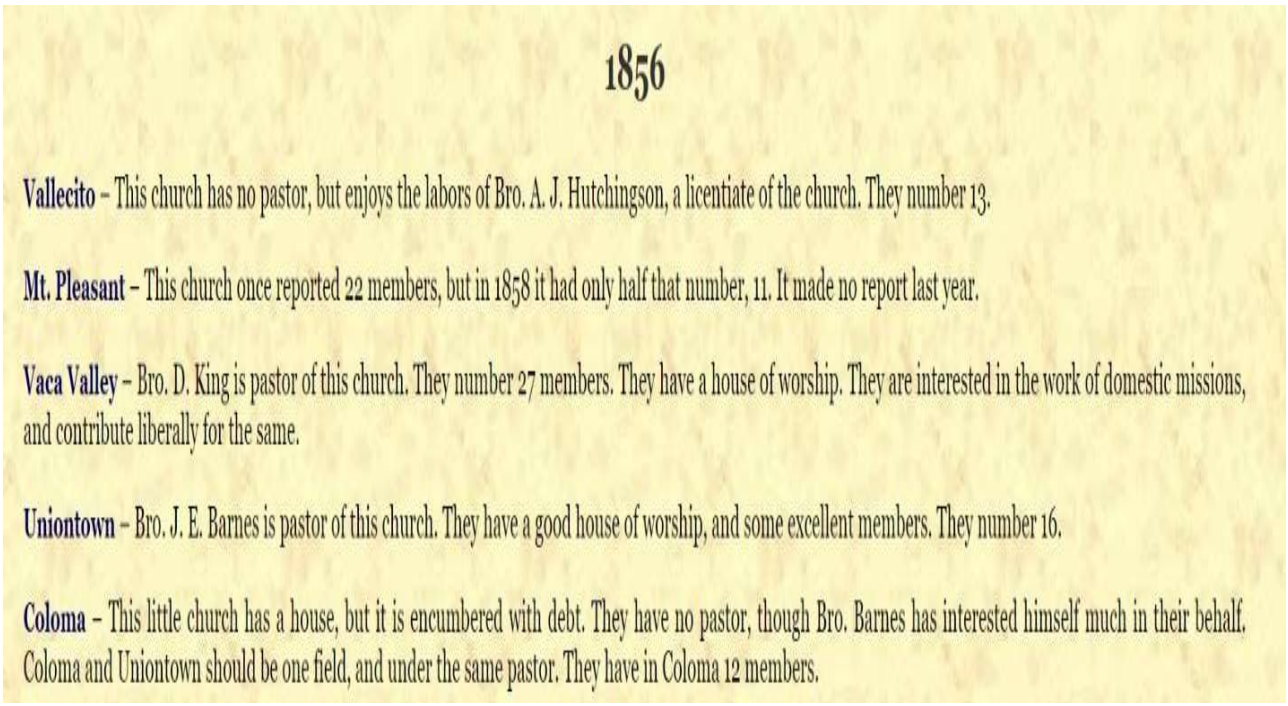
Rev. Barnes' first Sermon in Coloma as told by his daughter Mrs. Harlan.

Although Rev. Barnes' daughter states the year of her father's arrival in California was 1850, this date was most likely 1853. Nonetheless an interesting story.

In 1855 Rev. Barnes began preaching in Coloma. He resided in Uniontown and preached in the Coloma and Uniontown Baptist churches and various small churches that he established in the area. This Council was called Uniontown, El Dorado County. [9]

NOTICE.—The Rev. O. C. WHEELER will preach in the Baptist church on Sunday Nov. 16th., at half past 10 A. M., and also at 7 in the evening.

10



1856

Vallecito – This church has no pastor, but enjoys the labors of Bro. A. J. Hutchingson, a licentiate of the church. They number 13.

Mt. Pleasant – This church once reported 22 members, but in 1858 it had only half that number, 11. It made no report last year.

Vaca Valley – Bro. D. King is pastor of this church. They number 27 members. They have a house of worship. They are interested in the work of domestic missions, and contribute liberally for the same.

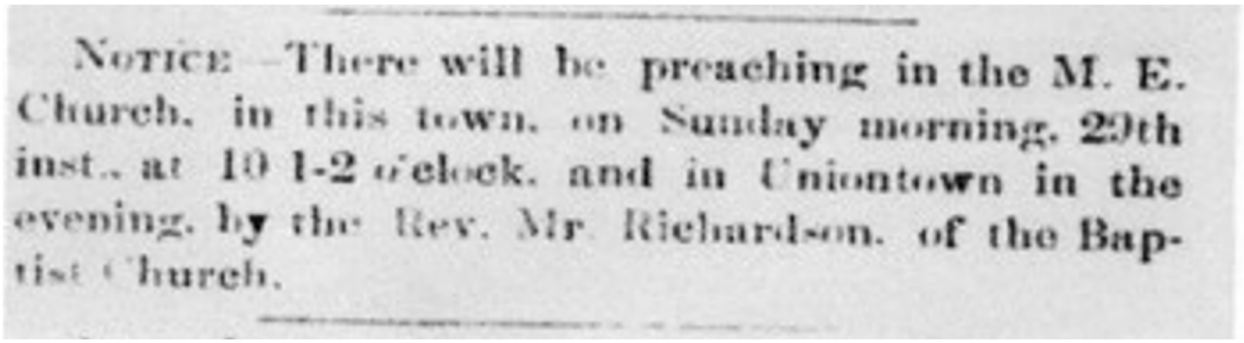
Uniontown – Bro. J. E. Barnes is pastor of this church. They have a good house of worship, and some excellent members. They number 16.

Coloma – This little church has a house, but it is encumbered with debt. They have no pastor, though Bro. Barnes has interested himself much in their behalf. Coloma and Uniontown should be one field, and under the same pastor. They have in Coloma 12 members.

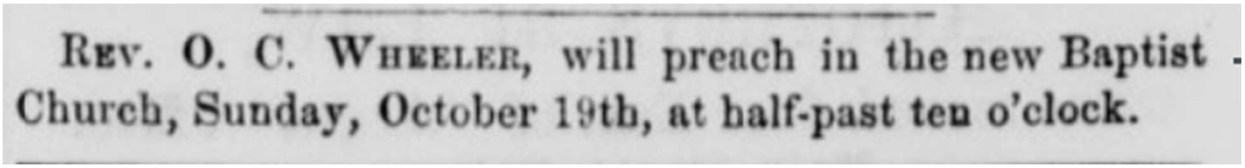
11

In 1856 The California Missionary Baptist Convention reported, “Coloma, the little church has a house (first floor of the I.O.O.F. hall), but it is incumbered in debt. They have no Pastor, but Brother Barnes has interested himself much in their behalf. Coloma and Uniontown should be one field, and under the same pastor. They have in Coloma 12 members”.

Although Rev. Barnes is credited with being the Baptist preacher for Coloma, we find others listed prior to 1855, specifically Rev. Richardson and Rev. Wheeler and Rev. Prevaux. The October 28, 1854, Empire Argus reported Rev. Richardson preaching at the Methodist Episcopal Church. This was prior to the Baptist’s attempted purchase of the first floor of the IOOF Hall.



NOTICE.—There will be preaching in the M. E. Church, in this town, on Sunday morning, 29th inst., at 10 1-2 o'clock, and in Uniontown in the evening, by the Rev. Mr. Richardson, of the Baptist Church.



REV. O. C. WHEELER, will preach in the new Baptist Church, Sunday, October 19th, at half-past ten o'clock.

[12]The Rev. O.C. Wheeler from Sacramento preaches at the Odd Fellows Hall in October 1856.

Various publications have reported that the Baptists paid for a portion of the I.O.O. F.'s construction so that they could meet on the lower floor.

Construction of the I.O.O.F. hall began in 1854.

Two years later, however, the September 6 and October 8, 1856, issues of the *Empire Argus* newspaper mention Baptist fundraising efforts to purchase the first floor of the I.O.O.F Hall for church purposes. This would have been at least a year after the Oddfellows built their hall. Regardless, the Baptists did meet in the I.O.O.F hall until they moved services to the Uniontown Baptist church in 1859.

THE FESTIVAL.—The festival gotten up by the ladies on Thursday evening, passed off very pleasantly. The object was to raise money to assist in the purchase of the first story of Odd Fellows Hall, for a Baptist Church. The sales of tickets yielded about $250. The ladies have raised about $400 by subscribtion, and still lack about $400 of the amount required to purchase the room. The festival on Thursday evening ended in a dance at the Sierra Nevada.

FESTIVAL.—The ladies are arranging for another festival, to be given at Odd Fellows' Hall on Thursday evening next. The proceeds of sales of tickets will be used in the purchase of the first story of the Hall, for church purposes.

13

14

1950's view of Coloma's I.O.O.F. Lodge #27 Hall

On Feb. 11th, 1857, Rev. Barnes was ordained to the Baptist Church by the Bishop Wheeler.[15]

The lot of Coloma Lodge #27 of the I.O.O.F. was donated by the Johnson family of Coloma in April 1854. An interesting fact regarding the I.O.O.F Hall's property donation is found in the State Historian, Hero Rench's, "A Study of Main Street of Coloma 1849-1853", *"where the hall was to also be the location of a "Free Church."* Why the Baptists were required to purchase the first floor can only be speculated.[16]

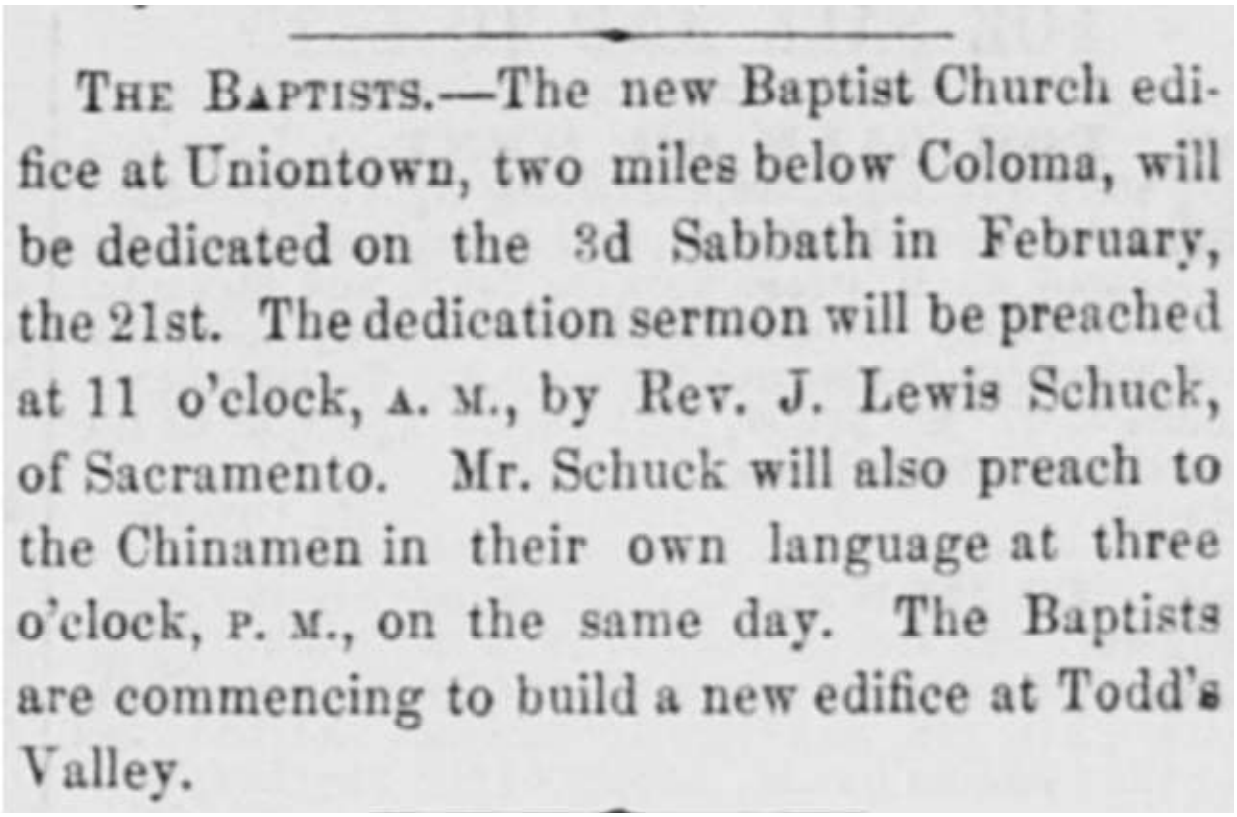
At the far west end of town was the area known as "Piety Hill." On the north side of Main in this area was the Court House Block and on the south side of the street was the American House Hotel which was proud of its patronage to families and advertised a healthful location and a wholesome atmosphere. The property up the hill and in back of the American House was owned by James Johnson and his wife who wished to establish this area as a center of culture and Christian endeavor, to which end they gave the property to the Coloma Lodge I.O.O.F. No. 27.

. . . a piece of ground 100' in length by 36' in width in S.W. corner of the enclosed ground owned by us opposite the Court House and in the town of Coloma said parcel of land being bounded on West end and South side by a fence and also the right to piece of ground 8' in width on West side of said lot from Main Street in Coloma to said piece or parcel of ground To have & to hold said piece for purpose of erecting & occupying thereon a building to be used as an Odd Fellows Hall & as a Church free to all Christian Denominations & for Lectures upon scientific, literary & moral subjects to Coloma Lodge No. 27 I.O.O.F. of the State of California.[1]

17

From the El Dorado County deed of James Johnson and wife to the Coloma Lodge I.O.O.F. Lodge No. 27.

1873 El Dorado County Survey Map showing location of the I.O.O.F Hall

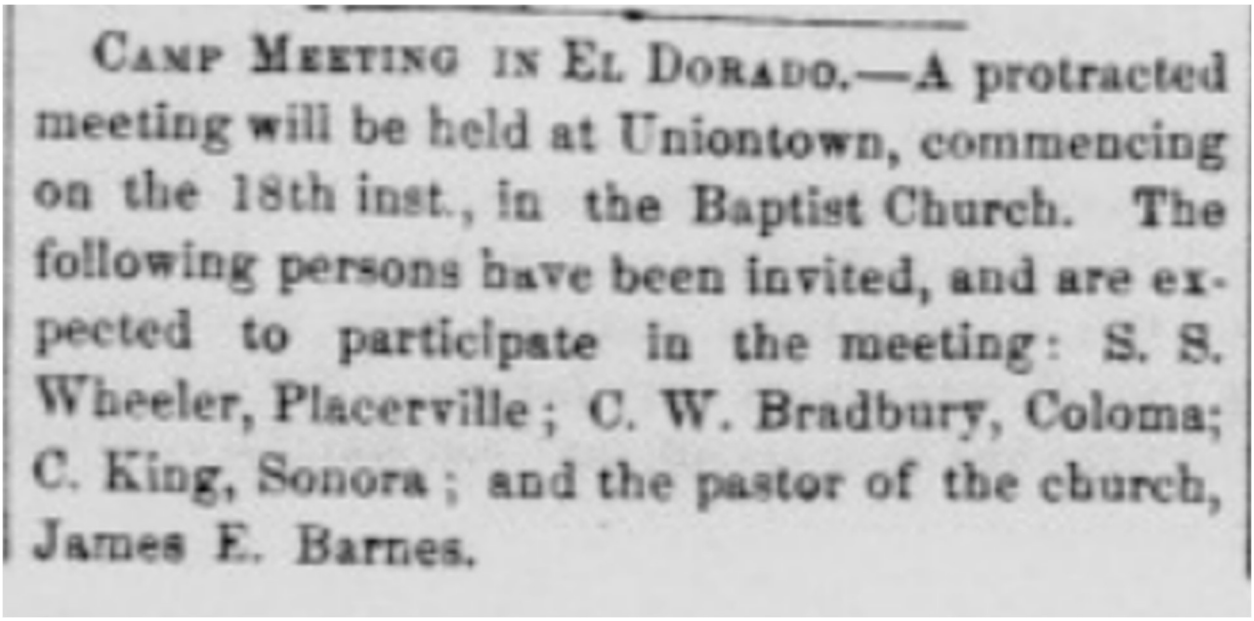


THE BAPTISTS.—The new Baptist Church edifice at Uniontown, two miles below Coloma, will be dedicated on the 3d Sabbath in February, the 21st. The dedication sermon will be preached at 11 o'clock, A. M., by Rev. J. Lewis Schuck, of Sacramento. Mr. Schuck will also preach to the Chinamen in their own language at three o'clock, P. M., on the same day. The Baptists are commencing to build a new edifice at Todd's Valley.

18

During the Uniontown church dedication, the Rev. J. Lewis Schuck was able as well to preach to the local Chinese in their own language as he had been one of the earliest American Baptist missionaries to China. He arrived in California from China in 1853, briefly returned to South Carolina and returned to establish a Chinese Baptist church in Sacramento and San Francisco in 1855. [19]

The first mention of Camp Meeting for the Baptist El Dorado Circuit



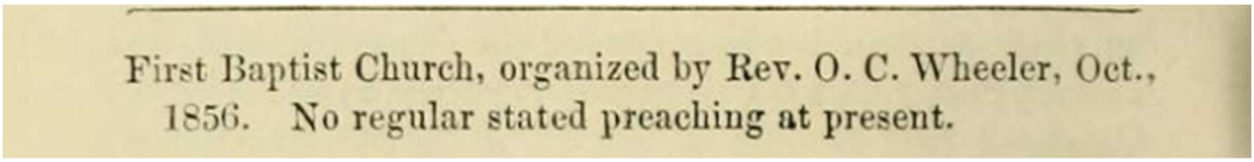
CAMP MEETING IN EL DORADO.—A protracted meeting will be held at Uniontown, commencing on the 18th inst., in the Baptist Church. The following persons have been invited, and are expected to participate in the meeting: S. S. Wheeler, Placerville; C. W. Bradbury, Coloma; C. King, Sonora; and the pastor of the church, James E. Barnes.

20

Camp Meeting at Uniontown February 17, 1858

Even though the Rev. O. C. Wheeler could not maintain churches in Coloma and Uniontown his brother C. C. Wheeler came to Placerville and established a Baptist church. He stays less than ten years before returning to the east coast.

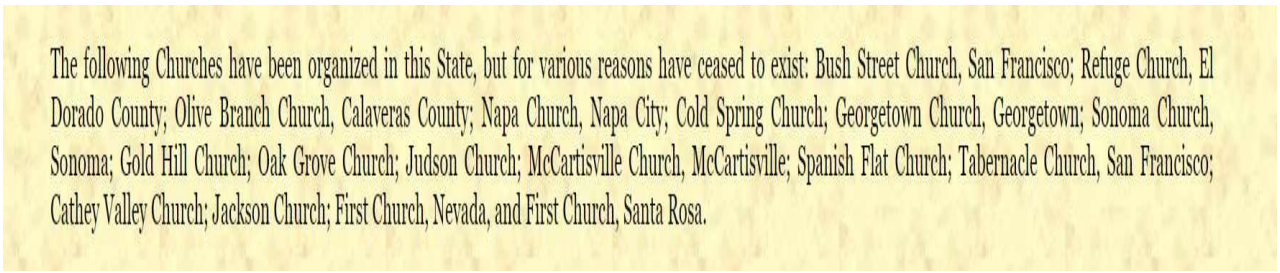
In 1859 the Baptists moved Coloma services to the Baptist Church in Uniontown (Lotus) as they still had not fully paid for the first floor of the I.O.O.F. Hall. This would mark the end of the Baptist church and services in Coloma.[21]


First Baptist Church, organized by Rev. O. C. Wheeler, Oct., 1856. No regular stated preaching at present.

22

1862 Coloma City Directory lists no Baptist service in Coloma.

In 1866 the California Missionary Baptist convention reported that the Following churches have ceased to exist, among those listed are Refuge Church Coloma, Cold Springs Church, Georgetown Church, and Gold Hill in El Dorado County, leaving Uniontown and Placerville as the surviving Baptist churches.


The following Churches have been organized in this State, but for various reasons have ceased to exist: Bush Street Church, San Francisco; Refuge Church, El Dorado County; Olive Branch Church, Calaveras County; Napa Church, Napa City; Cold Spring Church; Georgetown Church, Georgetown; Sonoma Church, Sonoma; Gold Hill Church; Oak Grove Church; Judson Church; McCartisville Church, McCartisville; Spanish Flat Church; Tabernacle Church, San Francisco; Cathey Valley Church; Jackson Church; First Church, Nevada, and First Church, Santa Rosa.

23

Earlier publications had reported that Pastor Barnes left for newer fields about 1870 or 1871, but voting records record him as living in Yolo County as early as 1866. Regardless, his moving resulted in leaving the Coloma and Uniontown (Lotus) communities without a permanent Baptist minister. [24]

The death Reverend Barnes 1896

CHICO, CALIFORNIA, FRIDAY EVENING, FEB. 28 1896

DEATH OF REV. BARNES.

PASSES PEACEFULLY AWAY AT HIS RESIDENCE.

Came to California in 1853.—Was an Ordained Minister for Forty Years.

The death last night of Rev. J. E. Barnes, though greatly lamented, caused no surprise among the large number of friends in Chico. The demise occurred at 9:10, and his wife, one daughter and one son were present at his death bed. Rev. Barnes had been suffering a long time from a disease of the stomach, and his death came as a relief from pain.

Rev. James E. Barnes was born in Livingston Co., Ky., near Carsville, on June 9, 1828, and was consequently 68 years old at his death. He came to California by the Isthmus, landing in San Francisco March 6, 1853. For four years after his arrival he worked at gold mining in El Dorado county. On April 23, 1859, he was married to Mrs. L. A. Lampton, at Cacheville, Yolo county, the issue of said marriage being six children, three sons and three daughters, all of whom are living.

Deceased was converted to christianity in 1847, uniting with the Baptist Church. In 1855, he began preaching in El Dorado county, and organized small churches in several of the mountain towns of that region. A council was called at Uniontown, El Dorado Co., on Feb. 11th, 1857, when deceased was regularly ordained to the ministry.

In his early ministry, he did a great deal of evangelistic work. Among the churches of which he has been pastor are those at Dixon, Napa, Los Angeles, Downey and Chico.

Deceased came to Chico in 1883, where he purchased property, and has lived ever since. He was one of our respected citizens, and was a prominent worker in all religious or temperance affairs.

About four months ago, he began ailing, and continued to grow worse. A month ago, he was confined to his bed, from which he never arose, gradually sinking until the end came. He suffered excruciating pain, but up to within an hour of his death he was conscious, and knew his wife's voice when she spoke to him. His passing away, unlike his sickness, was without pain, and he has gone to his Maker, whom he served faithfully for so many years.

Besides his wife, he leaves three daughters, Mrs. Lena J. Harlan of Sacramento, Mrs. Nettie Schubert of Chico and Mrs. Edith Reavis of Sacramento, and three sons, J. E. Barnes, Jr., of Ione, Amador county, M. P. Barnes of Sacramento, and J. L. Barnes of this city. He also leaves a stepson, E. T. Lampton, of Woodland. All these children visited him during his last illness.

The large circle of friends sympathize deeply with the bereaved ones to whom the deceased was a loving husband and father.

The Funeral.

The Baptist Church yesterday was filled with friends of the late Rev. J. E. Barnes, who were present to pay their last tribute to the memory of the departed. The floral offerings were grand and beautiful, and the casket was almost hidden in wreaths and baskets of flowers.

Rev. Dr. Graham delivered the obituary, and was assisted in the ceremonies by Revs. Stephens and Hathaway.

The deceased's favorite hymns were sung by a choir composed of Mrs. Z. W. Burnham (soprano), Miss Arvilla Bartlett (alto), A. F. Neubarth (tenor) and Perry Hendricks (bass). Mrs. E. E. Cunnett presided at the organ.

The funeral cortege was one of the largest ever seen in this city, and was testimony of the respect in which the deceased was held. Rev. Findley led in prayer at the grave.

The following acted as pall bearers: J. W. Crabb, R. J. Hampton, W. H. Eark, S. L. Walker, Chas. Faulkner and A. H. Crew.

Dr. Graham took for his text 2 Tim. 4:6-8, "For I am now ready to be offered and the time for my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge will give me at that day." The text was selected, the speaker said, by the deceased himself, and the sermon was in response to his dying request. The long intimacy in ministerial work was the basis of the request. In alluding to the text the speaker said: Two men once stood on the top of the Alps. One of them looked toward Rome and raising his hat exclaimed "Glories of the past I salute you!" The other lifted his hat and looking toward Germany exclaimed "Glories of the future I salute you!". Paul was both of these men in one.

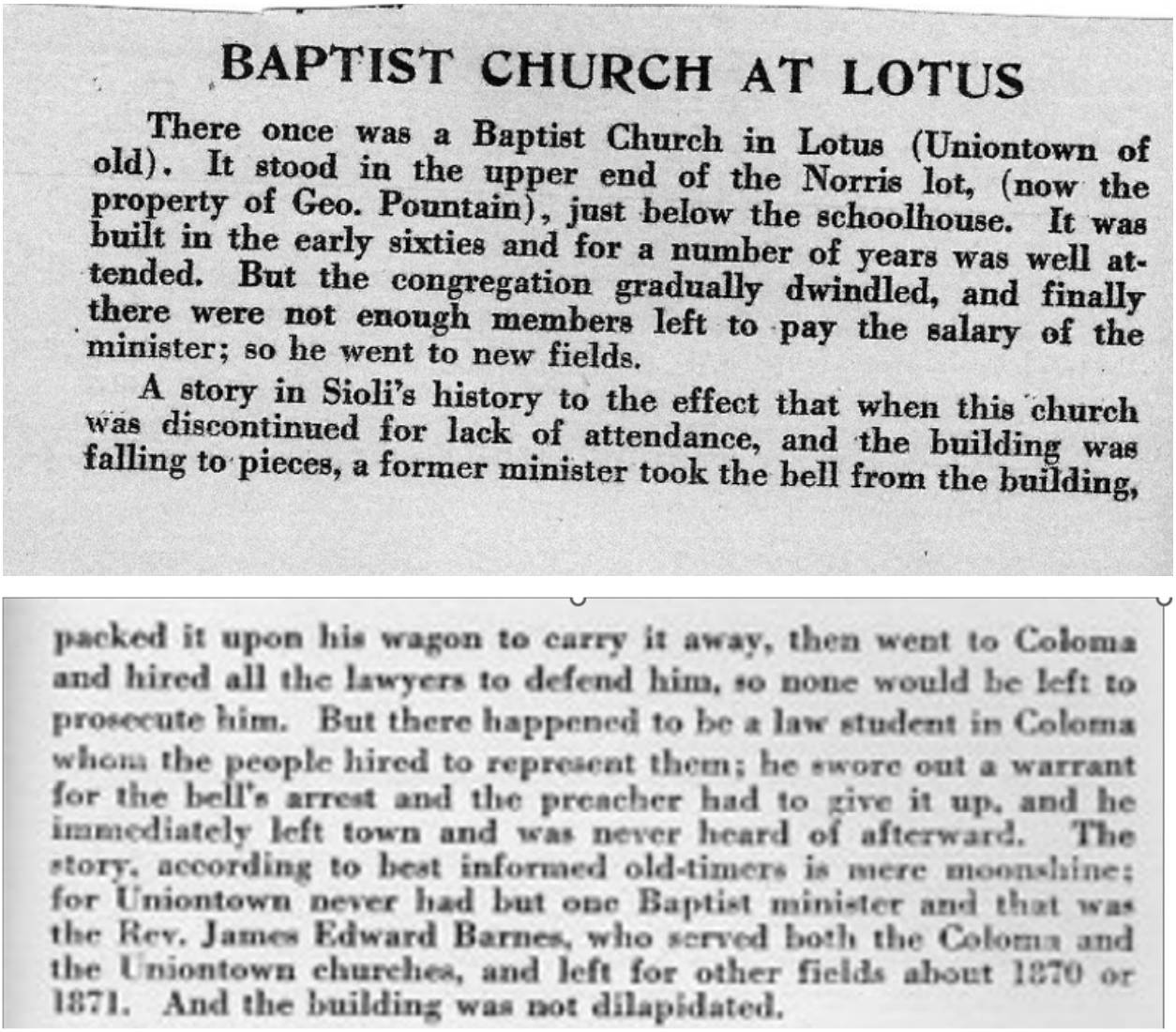
He stood on the Alpine top of an experience from which he could look back upon the glories of the past and forward into the glories of the future and salute both.

And in Paul's glance into the past what did he find? The text gives it to us in the most graphic language.

Here is one thing "I have fought a good fight"—*the* good fight. We all know what that fight was. It was the fight of the right against the wrong, truth against error, the pure against the impure, God against Satan. Paul wishes us to understand that he attempted to be God's moral hero all through, and that he never once lowered the flag nor sheathed the sword when the bugle call to battle sounded the alarm.

Coloma is prominent in an interesting story of the Uniontown (Lotus) Baptist Church that was constructed in 1859 and its bell.

This original church bell now resides in the current Coloma Schoolhouse inside of the Marshall Gold Discovery Historic State Park.



BAPTIST CHURCH AT LOTUS

There once was a Baptist Church in Lotus (Uniontown of old). It stood in the upper end of the Norris lot, (now the property of Geo. Pountain), just below the schoolhouse. It was built in the early sixties and for a number of years was well attended. But the congregation gradually dwindled, and finally there were not enough members left to pay the salary of the minister; so he went to new fields.

A story in Sioli's history to the effect that when this church was discontinued for lack of attendance, and the building was falling to pieces, a former minister took the bell from the building, packed it upon his wagon to carry it away, then went to Coloma and hired all the lawyers to defend him, so none would be left to prosecute him. But there happened to be a law student in Coloma whom the people hired to represent them; he swore out a warrant for the bell's arrest and the preacher had to give it up, and he immediately left town and was never heard of afterward. The story, according to best informed old-timers is mere moonshine; for Uniontown never had but one Baptist minister and that was the Rev. James Edward Barnes, who served both the Coloma and the Uniontown churches, and left for other fields about 1870 or 1871. And the building was not dilapidated.

26

This also ends another era in Coloma's rich church history.

Chapter 5

St. John’s Catholic Church

Saint John's Catholic Church Timeline

1850

- The first Catholic missionaries arrived in El Dorado County Services in Coloma are held in a log structure provided by the community.

1857

- The lot containing Saint John's church and cemetery was acquired from Oliver and Mary Camp for $200.00.

1858

- Funds were raised and the Coloma Saint John's church was built.

1861

- Saint John's Catholic church was officially blessed by San Francisco Bishop Alemany under the invocation of Saint John the Baptist.
- A public school was established at the church in Coloma that served the surrounding communities.

1865

- The school was closed due to declining enrollment.

1869

- The Saint John's Catholic Church loses its congregation and priest and remains mostly empty.

1885

- Rev. Patrick Manogue of Sacramento Diocese transfers all El Dorado County Church properties to Patrick W. Riordan of St. Patrick's Church in Placerville.

1891

- Rev. Patrick Manogue authorizes the sale of a portion of the St. John's church and cemetery property to the State of California for the construction of the Marshall Monument.

1901

- Saint John's became part of the Georgetown Catholic Church with Reverend Keane as circuit pastor.

1919

- Saint John's Catholic Church becomes a mission of the Placerville Catholic Church.

1920

- Saint John's Church is renovated.

1921

- Saint John's Catholic church is rededicated and used periodically until around 1940.

1969

- Saint John's Catholic Church is donated to the State of California.

1972

- Saint John's Church is restored.

2024

- State Parks maintenance staff restore Saint John's Church.

St. John's Catholic Church Today

1

From the archives of St. Patrick's Church of Placerville, *"the first Catholic services in the gold fields of El Dorado County occurred in the Spring of 1850 when the first Catholic Missionary Father Ingoldsby arrived to preach and administer to the spiritual needs, helping the sick and burying the dead in the mining camps of El Dorado County".*[2]

The vale of Coloma was not a thing of beauty; the banks of the river and the adjoining hillsides had been literally turned inside out, and great heaps of cobblestones and gravel met the eye in every direction.[92] A cluster of cabins and a few stores and saloons indicated the presence of a surviving community, for Coloma at that time was the center of supplies for all the surrounding camps along the river, and had still retained the honor of being the county seat of El Dorado County. Many miners lived in tents in the adjoining gulches, and to these word was sent that a visiting priest would hold services in Coloma on the following Sunday. Old-timers tell of how

the inhabitants of the town provided a cabin for Father Ingoldsby in which to say Mass, and made the promise of erecting a church for him as soon as possible.

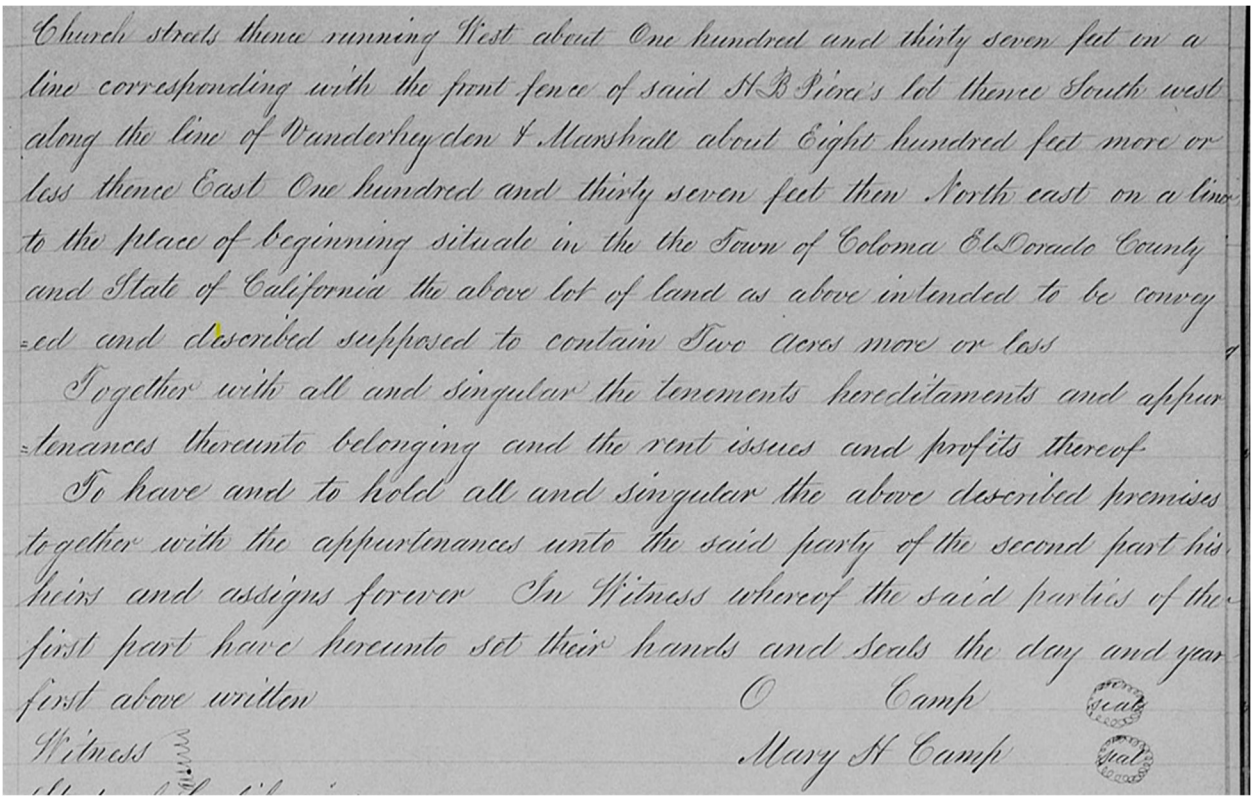
[3] Father Ingoldsby's June 1851 report on Coloma

Besides Father's Ingoldsby, Largan and O'Kane, the priests that served Coloma and the rest of El Dorado Counties Mission churches are speculation as the published history of Saint Partick's church conflicts with the Sacramento Diocesan Archives and those from the University of Santa Clara. [4]

Prior to the establishment of Saint John's Catholic church in Coloma the services were held in a log cabin beginning in 1850, the location of which remains unknown at this time.[5]

After the church in Placerville was erected, a church was established in Coloma in 1856. Funds were raised to erect a church in Coloma and in 1858 the St. John's Church was built.[6]

The lot for the St. John's Church was acquired for the price of $200.00 from Judge Oliver and Mary Camp and deeded to Joseph S. Alemany, (Alemany) Archbishop of San Francisco on Oct. 19, 1857. The deed shows it lies between Church Street, H. B. Pierce, Vanderhyden's and Marshall's lots, the lot approximately two acres in size.



Church streets thence running West about One hundred and thirty seven feet on a line corresponding with the front fence of said H B Pierce's lot thence South west along the line of Vanderhyden & Marshall about Eight hundred feet more or less thence East One hundred and thirty seven feet then North east on a line to the place of beginning situate in the the Town of Coloma El Dorado County and State of California the above lot of land as above intended to be convey =ed and described supposed to contain Two Acres more or less

Together with all and singular the tenements hereditaments and appur =tenances thereunto belonging and the rent issues and profits thereof.

To have and to hold all and singular the above described premises together with the appurtenances unto the said party of the second part his heirs and assigns forever In Witness whereof the said parties of the first part have hereunto set their hands and Seals the day and year first above written

O Camp Seal

Witness Mary A Camp Seal

7

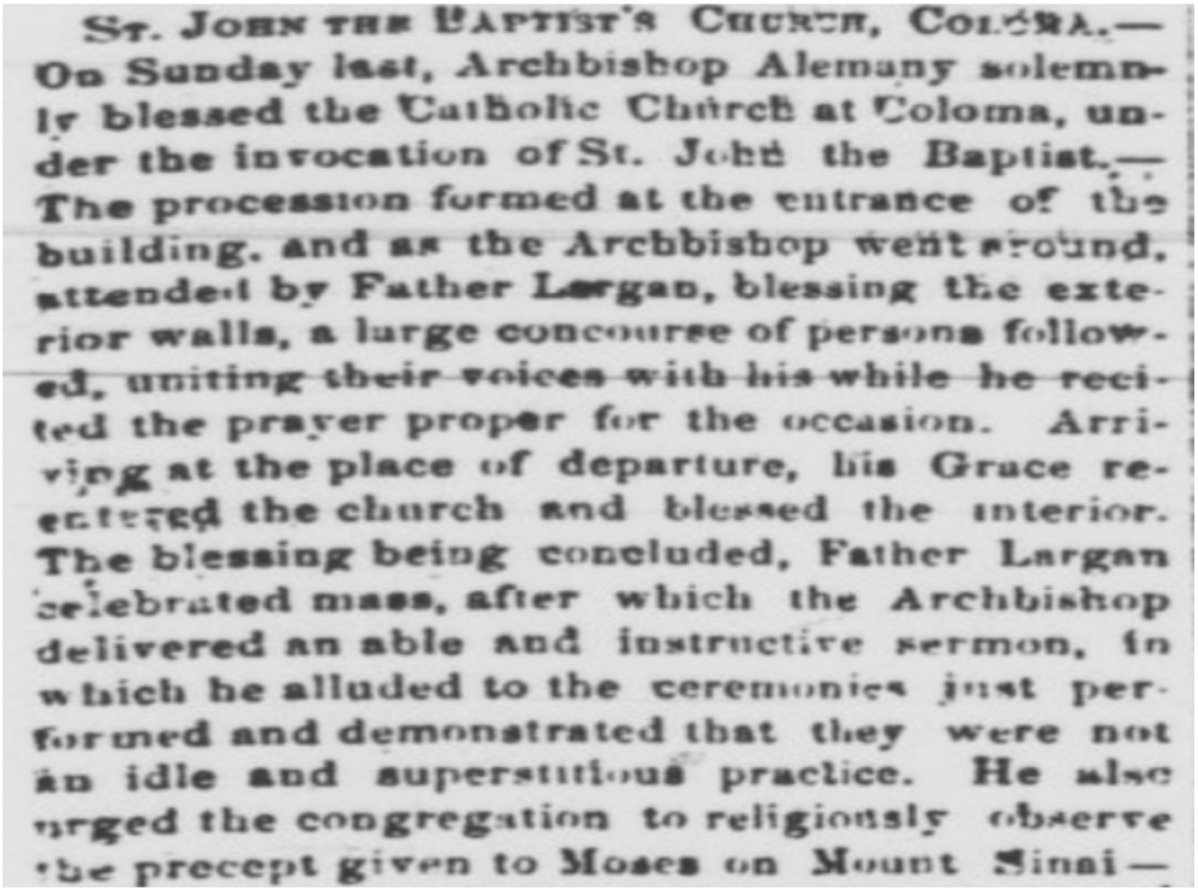
"The church at Coloma, just as in Placerville, had its start in a log cabin in the spring of 1850. The present church was built in 1857. At about the same time, a Catholic church was erected in Georgetown."[8]

As the church in Coloma was considered a Mission, there were no resident priests in Coloma. This parish initially was served by Placerville's priests.

According to the Holy Name Society of St. Patrick's church, St. John's church in Coloma served not only Coloma but Gold Hill, Green Valley, Weber Creek, Uniontown, Uniontown Hill, and the Trescott Flat mining districts.[9]

Gold rush era services were held on the third Sunday of each month by Father Largan from 1858 to 1869. His Mass was held in both English and then Spanish to accommodate the Spanish speaking miners.[10]

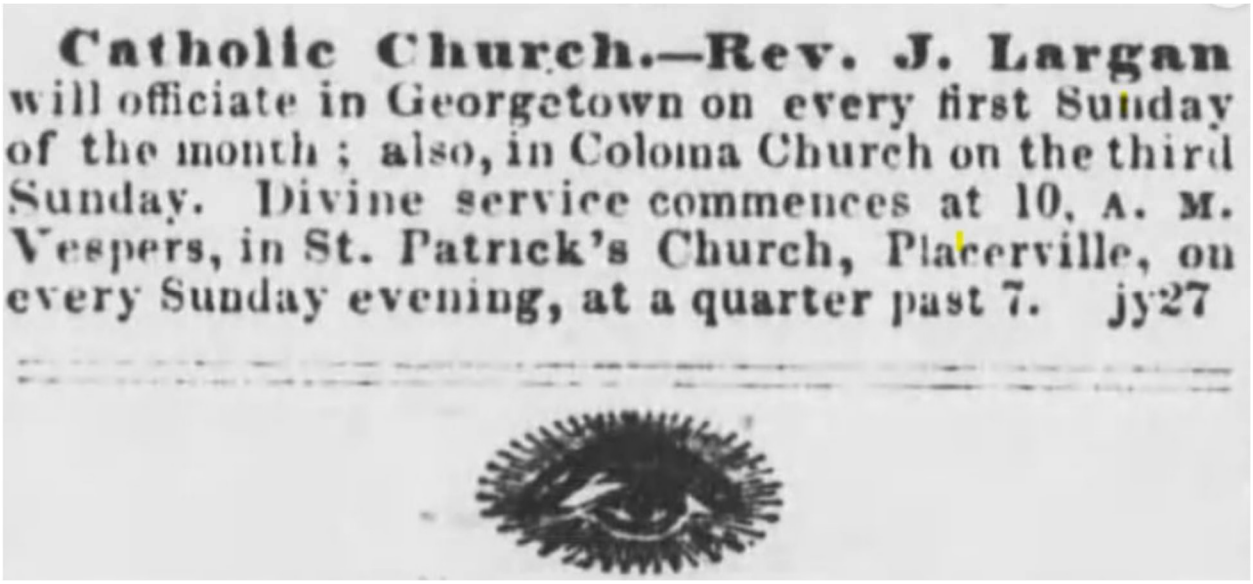
1861 Archbishop Alemany blesses the Coloma church as “Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church”



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST'S CHURCH, COLOMA.—On Sunday last, Archbishop Alemany solemnly blessed the Catholic Church at Coloma, under the invocation of St. John the Baptist.—The procession formed at the entrance of the building, and as the Archbishop went around, attended by Father Largan, blessing the exterior walls, a large concourse of persons followed, uniting their voices with his while he recited the prayer proper for the occasion. Arriving at the place of departure, his Grace reentered the church and blessed the interior. The blessing being concluded, Father Largan celebrated mass, after which the Archbishop delivered an able and instructive sermon, in which he alluded to the ceremonies just performed and demonstrated that they were not an idle and superstitious practice. He also urged the congregation to religiously observe the precept given to Moses on Mount Sinai—

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." After mass the sacrament of confirmation was administered. The ceremonies of blessing the Church were most solemn and imposing, and tended much to excite the devotion of those who assisted in their celebration. Large numbers of people from this city and other places were present, and consequently the church was much too small to accommodate all that attended. The building is not large, but is neatly furnished, and occupies a most desirable location, commanding a view of the entire town of Coloma, its beautiful gardens and vineyards, and the magnificent surrounding scenery. The Archbishop left for Sacramento on Monday morning, amid the regrets of not only the church members but of very many who are not of his religion, whose approbation and admiration he has won by the ability and piety displayed in his sermons and by his apparently entire freedom from bigotry, self-conceit and pride of place. May Heaven smile upon his labors.

11



Catholic Church.—Rev. J. Largan will officiate in Georgetown on every first Sunday of the month; also, in Coloma Church on the third Sunday. Divine service commences at 10, A. M. Vespers, in St. Patrick's Church, Placerville, on every Sunday evening, at a quarter past 7. jy27

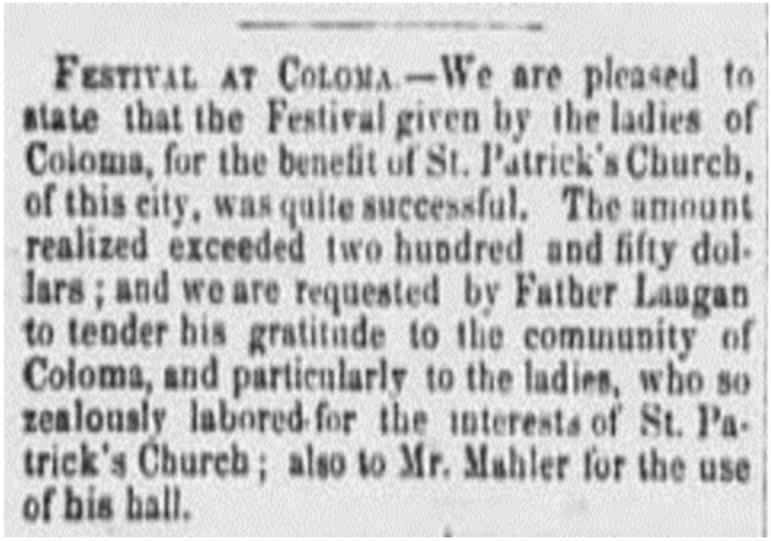
12

George Johnson notes in his letter to the Timmey family in Placerville,[13]

"I remember that a Catholic school was in operation in 1861, and among the teachers was Miss Elisabeth Kelly, afterwards Mrs. MacDonald, and then another Miss Kelly (Miss Margret A. Kelly, who formerly taught in the Sacramento public schools.) The Church and school served a large scope of the county, including – besides Coloma, Gold Hill, Green Valley, Weber Creek, Uniontown, Uniontown Hill, and Trescott Flat district. The school was well attended for a while, but when the placer mining began to fall off in 1865, and the population decreased, it was forced to close its doors.[14]

Before the public school was started Father Largan said *"There will be no attempt to instill into the mind of any Protestant child the principal's peculiar to Catholicism, as it is in a church and the home that children should receive religious training."[15]*

George Johnson, while not a Catholic was good friends with Father Largan. George took care of St. John's Church and functioned as Sexton on the Sundays that services were held.[16]



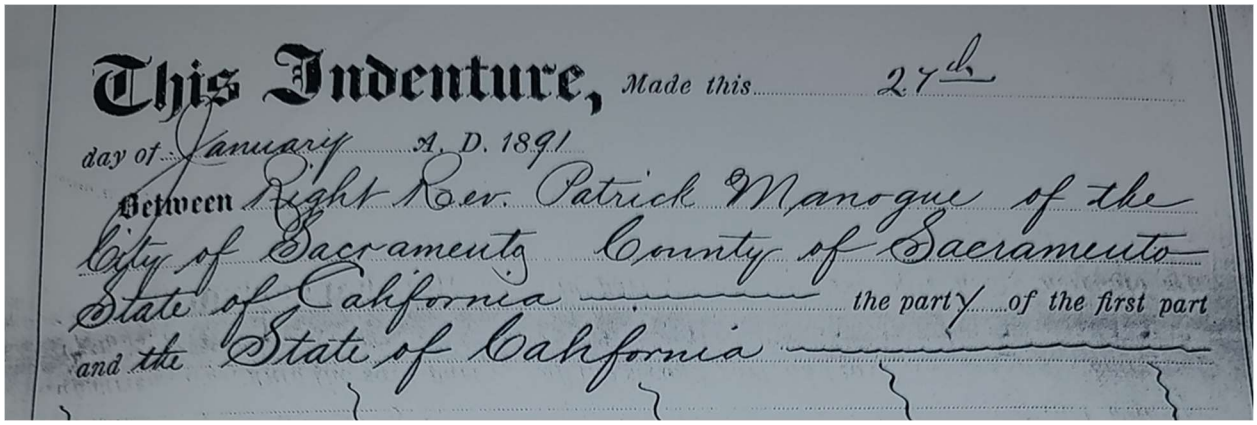
FESTIVAL AT COLOMA.—We are pleased to state that the Festival given by the ladies of Coloma, for the benefit of St. Patrick's Church, of this city, was quite successful. The amount realized exceeded two hundred and fifty dollars; and we are requested by Father Laugan to tender his gratitude to the community of Coloma, and particularly to the ladies, who so zealously labored for the interests of St. Patrick's Church; also to Mr. Mahler for the use of his hall.

Mountain Democrat June 3, 1865

After 1869 St. John's slowly lost its congregation and priest and eventually it stood empty and was only randomly used for many years.[17]

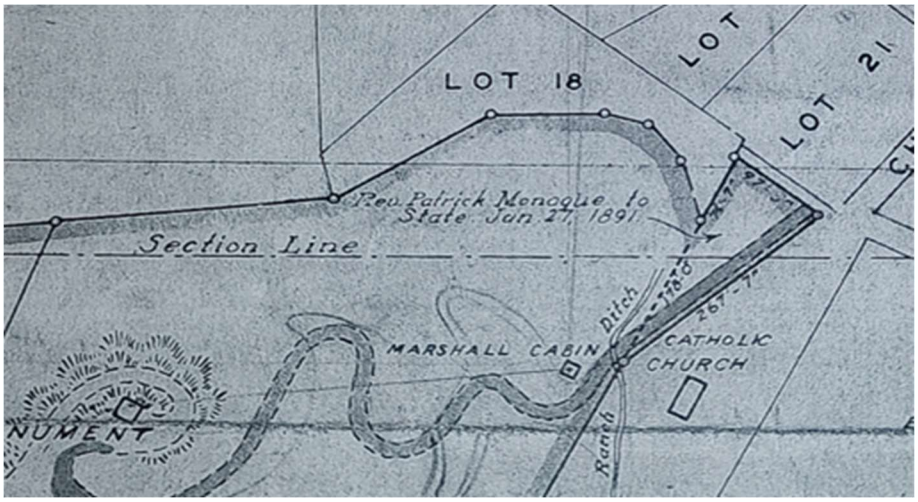
In April 1885 the Rev, Patrick Monague of the Sacramento Diocese deeded over to Rev. Patrick William Riordan of Placerville all the Catholic Church properties held in El Dorado County.[18]

On January 27, 1891, the Catholic Diocese of Sacramento authorizes a sale of a portion of the Saint John's Church and Cemetery property to the State of California for inclusion into the Marshall Monument for $150.00.[19]



This Indenture, Made this 27th day of January A. D. 1891 Between Right Rev. Patrick Manogue of the City of Sacramento County of Sacramento State of California the party of the first part and the State of California

Deed for Saint John's Church property to the State of California for the Marshall Monument



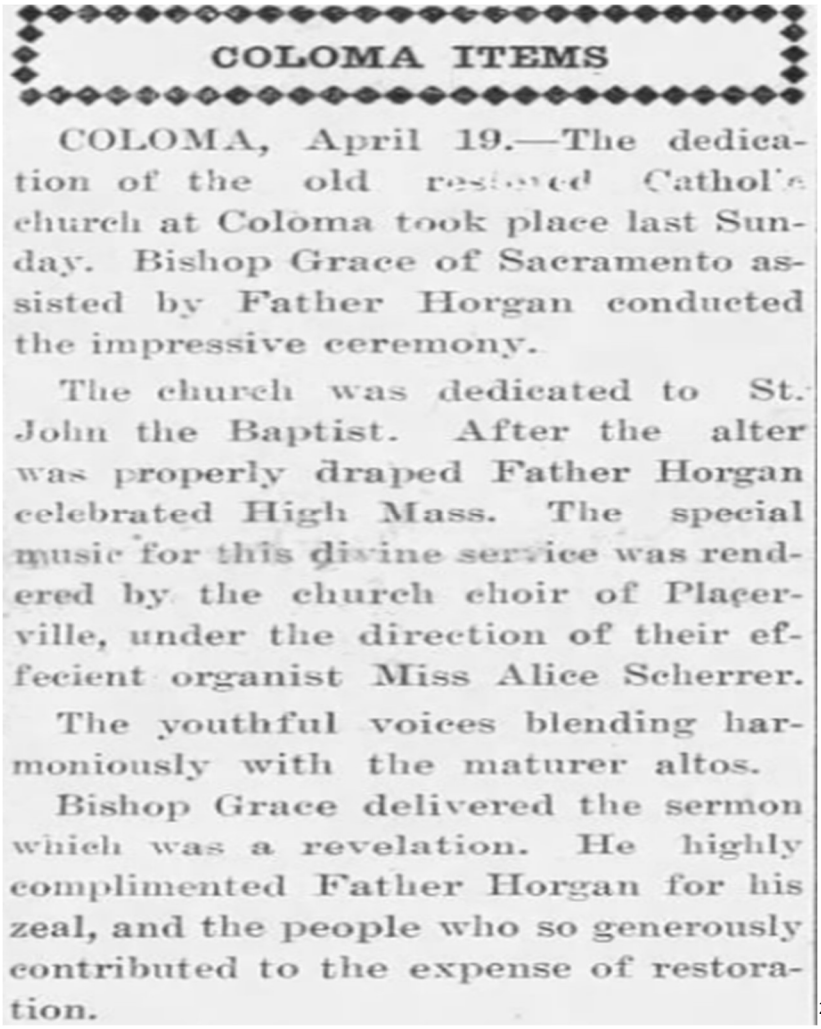
Bancroft map showing outline of property sold by the Sacramento Catholic Diocese to the State of California[20]

Coloma remained a Mission of Placerville's St. Patrick's Church until 1901 when it was taken over by Father O'Kane of Georgetown.[21]

From 1913 to 1920 the church was closed due to disrepair and lack of a Priest.

In 1919 the church was repaired and again both Georgetown and Coloma churches became Missions to the Placerville church under Father Thomas Hayes.[22]

St. John's was formally rededicated on April 18, 1920, by the Bishop Grace of Sacramento. Periodic services were held for a few years afterwards then sporadically with services ending at the end of World War II.[23]



COLOMA ITEMS

COLOMA, April 19.—The dedication of the old restored Catholic church at Coloma took place last Sunday. Bishop Grace of Sacramento assisted by Father Horgan conducted the impressive ceremony.

The church was dedicated to St. John the Baptist. After the alter was properly draped Father Horgan celebrated High Mass. The special music for this divine service was rendered by the church choir of Placerville, under the direction of their effecient organist Miss Alice Scherrer.

The youthful voices blending harmoniously with the maturer altos.

Bishop Grace delivered the sermon which was a revelation. He highly complimented Father Horgan for his zeal, and the people who so generously contributed to the expense of restoration.[24]

The re-opening of the Catholic church here last Sunday drew out a large crowd, and in the usual ceremonies, the interest centered in the excellent address of Bishop Grace. The day was ideal for such a gathering, and all appreciated the picture—the church, with its quaint bell tower, among the pines, and hardly just over the way, Marshall's cabin and the monument grounds

25

AFTER ELEVEN YEARS

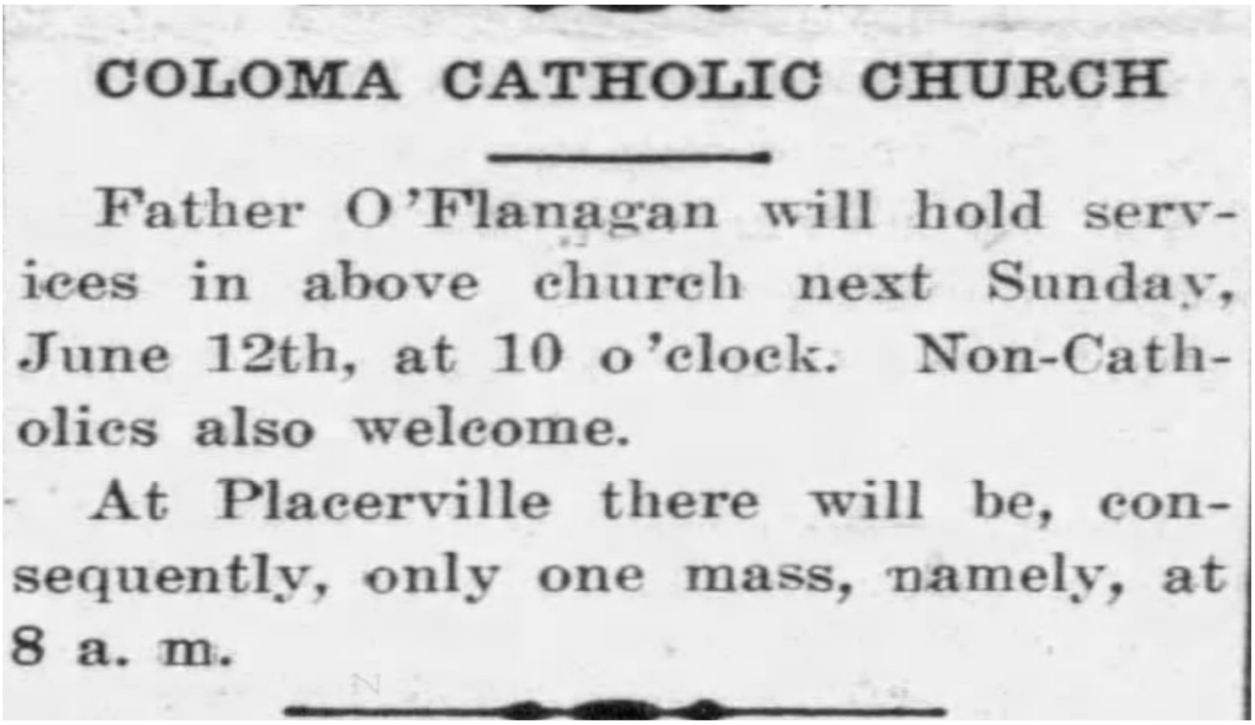
After a lapse of eleven years Sunday services have been resumed in the Catholic church at Coloma. The church is one of the historic buildings of California, having been constructed and first used in 1855. During all the gold days of Coloma the church had its regular Sunday congregation.

After 1900 the population dwindled and in 1913 services were discontinued. During 1921 the local Catholics started a fund to reconstruct it. During that year the church was rededicated for services by the late Bishop Thomas Grace of Sacramento. The church is now in use and Father Thomas J. Hayes of Placerville conducts services on the second and fourth Sundays of each month.

26

March 19, 1923

Reporting St. John's church had been closed from 1913 to 1921.

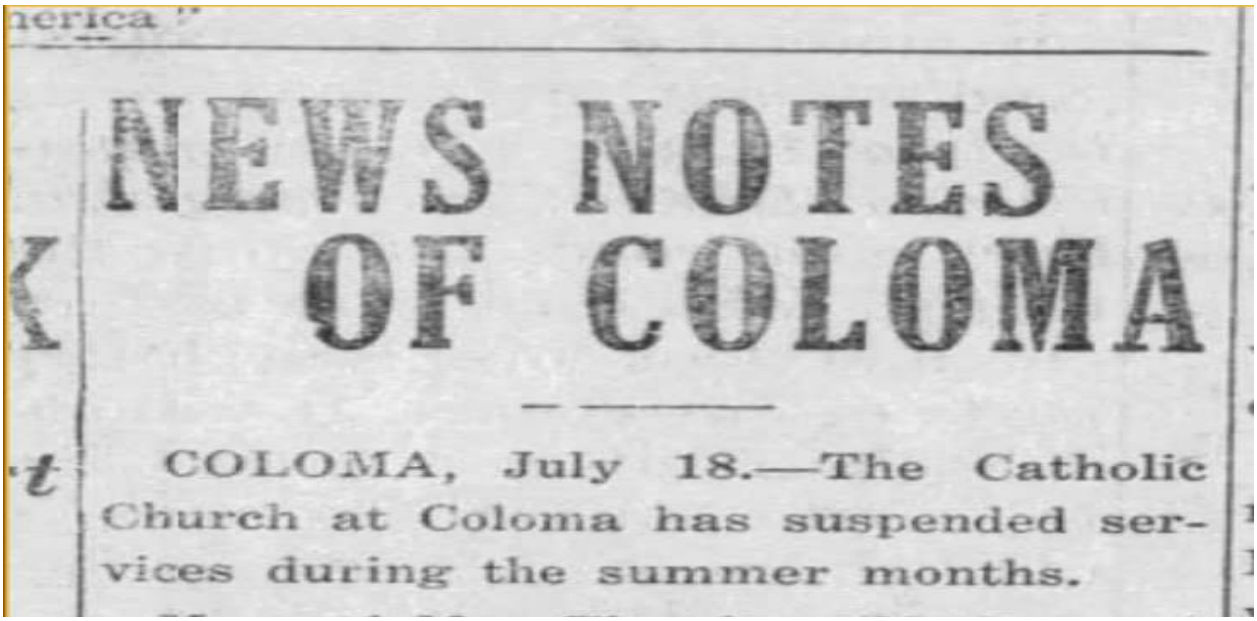


COLOMA CATHOLIC CHURCH

Father O'Flanagan will hold services in above church next Sunday, June 12th, at 10 o'clock. Non-Catholics also welcome.

At Placerville there will be, consequently, only one mass, namely, at 8 a. m.

In 1921 Father Flanagan sporadically held services in Coloma until about 1929 when the church was closed and services transferred to St. Patrick's Catholic church in Placerville.[27]



NEWS NOTES OF COLOMA

COLOMA, July 18.—The Catholic Church at Coloma has suspended services during the summer months.

28

On April 20, 1969, the church was donated to Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park by the Diocese of Sacramento.[29]

There are notations in State Park files and some publications referring to a Rev. Cool holding service in the 2000's. These refer to the Native Sons of the Golden West re-enactor named Jerry Pozo who portrayed the Rev. Peter Y. Cool a pioneer Methodist preacher who in 1850 lived in Cave Valley (Cool, CA).

The 113-Year-Old St. John's Catholic Church Bee Photo

Restoration Drive

Funds Would Renovate Venerable Church

COLOMA, El Corado Co. — Early-day descendants of this community and other interested persons have begun a fund-raising campaign to restore the 113-year-old St. John's Catholic Church which stands in Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park.

The program is being undertaken as a joint enture with the Department of Parks and Recreation. The goal has been set at $10,000.

First to donate to the fund was Mrs. phil Bekeart and family with a $250 check.

The all-wood church was erected in 858, when Coloma was a thriving mining and lumbering camp. In 1920 the structure was repaired and was used for services until 1940.

Persons wishing to donate may send their contributions to the St. John's Catholic Church Restoration Fund, c-o Florence Fannen, Treasurer, Coloma.

If sufficient funds are available, the restoration work will begin next spring, Park Ranger E. G. Till Jr. states.

Sacramento Bee September 9, 1971

In 1970 the people in the area started a “Lets Reopen the Doors” fundraising campaign. Starting with the Mountain Democrat article the donations started to arrive. The first to donate to the fund was the Bekeart family, followed by artist George Mathis who donated two hundred numbered lithographs of the church. These were incentive gifts for those donated a window or a pew. With the help of residents, and the State Parks staff they successfully restored St. Johns Church in 1972 funded with a combination of private and state funds.

One of the donations for the restoration came from the comedian George Burns through his daughter and her husband, the Luckman’s. The Luckman’s lived and owned a campground in Coloma at the time of the restoration.[30]

During the restoration of the church the Stations of the Cross were repainted, making them too bright compared to the original hues. The keen eye will see that the back of the tabernacle says,” Thompsons Black Berry Syrup” as Frank Bekeart used recycled wood during the restoration of the tabernacle.[31] The original altar had been hand carved by Francois Bekeart for Father Largan. [32] When restorations began, the altar was found face down but not damaged.[33]

A Mountain Democrat article from February 1973 reports on the rededication of St. John’s catholic church and states that the “fine old pews came from the Georgetown catholic church, the two stations that flank the sanctuary and the sanctuary lights and vestments came from Our Lady of the Lourdes, and old chapel torn down a few years ago in Hunters Point in San Francisco. These were purchased from the San

Francisco Society of St. Paul. Also purchased were alter cloths and linens required for Mass.[34]

Additionally, the water font came from St. Augustine's church in Pleasanton, California it is believed to be as old as St. John's church. The Stations of the Cross were original to St. Patrick's church in Placerville, originally from Austria or Germany they date to the late 1860's as these were original the St. Patrick's that was rebuilt after the arson fire that destroyed the original church in April 1865. Damaged by the extreme temperature fluctuations they needed restoration. The State Park under Superintendent Matt Sugerman saw the statues restoration.[35]

The organ was sent from Columbia State Park and restored to working order.[36]

The bell tower was missing by this time, with help from photos and an old set of plans the tower was assembled by state parks carpenters. The bell which had been stored in Placerville for over forty years was donated to the park and re-installed.[37]

On January 23, 1973, in connection with the 125th anniversary of the discovery of gold Father O'Brian of Placerville under reopened the church.[38] This service marked the first service at St. John's since 1947."[39]

June of 2024 marked the completion of yet another stabilization and major rehabilitation of St. John's church by the craftspeople at the State

Park. Bee hives were removed; rotted wood was replaced, and a new roof and new paint.

History of Saint John's Church as told by California State Parks

The Catholic congregation of Coloma worshipped on this ground since the early gold rush. This church was opened in 1858, replacing a log church built two years earlier. On the morning of April 20, 1858, a dedication procession made its way up Piety Hill from the town, led by Father Largan of Placerville. Mass and dedication ceremonies followed.

After 1860, this little church fell into disrepair as the fortunes of Coloma declined and the congregation dwindled. In the late 19th century, the building was repaired and was rededicated as St. Joseph's Church in 1890. Again, the structure fell into decay, and in 1921 it had to be practically rebuilt.

Regular services ceased 10 or 20 years later, and local Catholics went to mass in Placerville. On April 30, 1969, the Bishop of the Diocese of Sacramento deeded the dilapidated structure to the State of California as a gift. In 1972 the State Park and the community working in partnership undertook a restoration of the building. The Bekeart family of San Francisco, descendants of Jules Francois Bekeart who built the gunsmith shop in the town below, provided leadership in this effort. Statues and Stations of the Cross dating from the mid-19thcentury were acquired, pews polished, and the altar furnished. The free-standing bell tower was restored and carries the original bell that the parish had cast in Sheffield England in 1860.The cross on the roof of the church appears to be of an Austrian design.[1]

Saint John’s Catholic Church continues today to serve the community as a wedding destination.

Chapter 6

Mormon

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

Mormon Timeline

1847

- The first recorded religious service in Coloma.

- Elders Stuart and Shearman preach in Court House.

Mormon

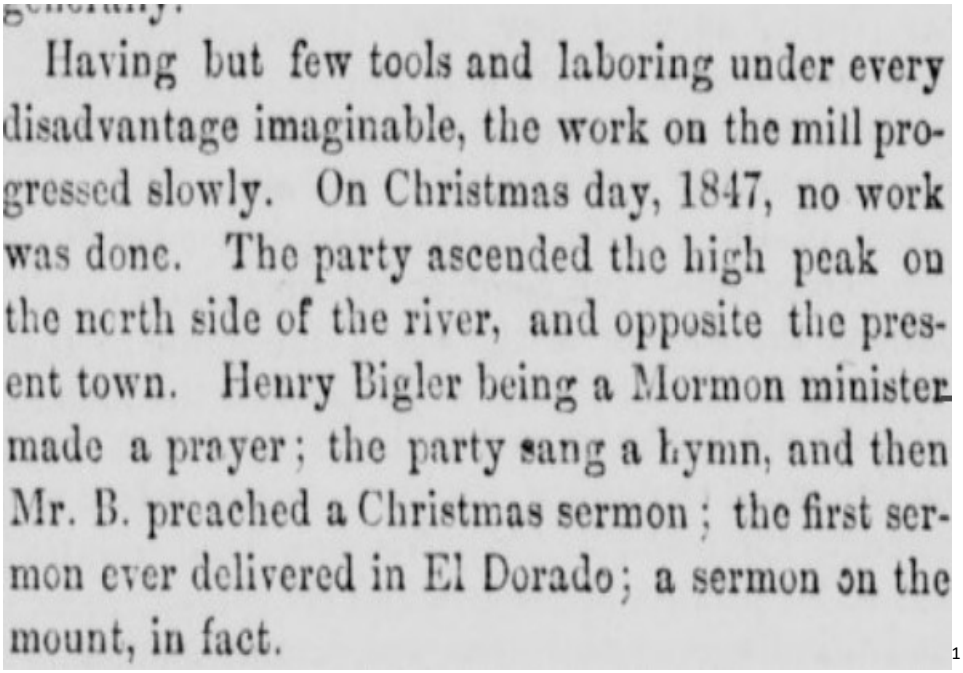
(Church of Latter-Day Saints)

In 1847, a group of Mormon Battalion members from the Church of Latter-Day Saints were working for John Sutter and James Marshall during the construction of the sawmill at Coloma, these men were just a small group of the Mormon Battalion members that Brigham Young had asked to stay in California after the war with Mexico due to having limited supplies in Salt Lake City.

The Mormons never built a church in Coloma as their numbers were never more than a dozen and most had left Coloma within a few months of the discovery of gold.

The Mormons are to be given credit for the first recorded religious service in Coloma.

On Christmas Day in 1847, less than a month prior to the Discovery of Gold on January 23, 1848, on a peak overlooking town Henry Bigler gave the first recorded sermon in Coloma.



Having but few tools and laboring under every disadvantage imaginable, the work on the mill progressed slowly. On Christmas day, 1847, no work was done. The party ascended the high peak on the north side of the river, and opposite the present town. Henry Bigler being a Mormon minister made a prayer; the party sang a hymn, and then Mr. B. preached a Christmas sermon; the first sermon ever delivered in El Dorado; a sermon on the mount, in fact.[1]

Sermon on the Mount

Today the peak where the sermon occurred is known as Mount Murphy.

In this excerpt from James S. Brown, *California Gold*, recorded in Salt Lake City on Jan. 24, 1894. He listed the six members of the Mormon Battalion that worked for James Marshall during construction of "Sutter's Mill" and would have taken part in the "Sermon on the Mount."

"Mormon Battalion members that came to Coloma, (Alexander Stephens, Henry W. Bigler, James Berger, William Johnson, Azariah Smith, James S. Brown, and Israel Evans, were hired to follow; James W. Marshall (Mr. Sutter's partner)."[2]

Notice.—Elders Stuart and Shearman, of the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints," will preach in the Court House to-morrow, (Sunday,) at 2 o'clock P. M.

[3]

The last recorded mention of Mormons in Coloma is that of a service on June 1st, 1856, at the Coloma Court House.

On Patrick's Peak was preached the first sermon in El Dorado county, or I might say in the Sierra Nevada mountains. The hands at work on Sutter's Mill ascended the mount on Christmas morning, 1847. A Mormon Elder, who was also in the employ of Captain Sutter, read a portion of Scriptures, offered up a prayer of thanksgiving, and made a short exhortation. This must have been a solemn occasion. Far from the haunts of civilization, on the lone mountain top, a band of adventurers were engaged in solemn communion with the Father of our spirits. Little did they dream that a few fleeting months and their mountain home, rough and secluded as it was, would become the Aladin of the world.

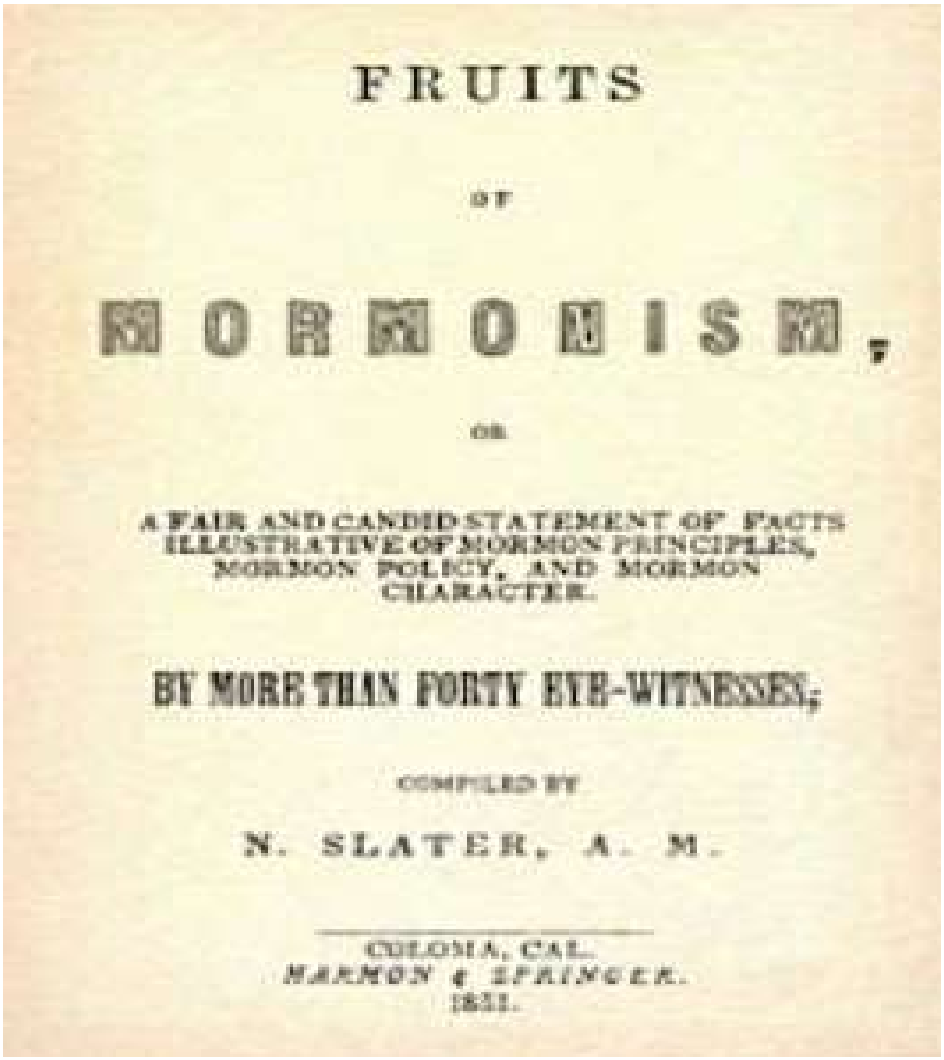
Eleven years later and the writer stood upon the same spot, and read to an accompanying friend, the ever memorable Sermon on the Mount, which has withstood the changes of decaying dynastys, and is destined to stand until the heavens shall be rolled together like a scroll, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. The solemn silence of nature is grand. How I love to worship at her shrine, and pay homage to that Being who made it so.

Many historical events have occurred in and around Coloma. Space forbids that I should mention them, yet duty dictates that I must. I will divide the difference by giving a few items, and leave the balance for a more convenient season.

[4]

Twelve years after the first sermon in Coloma, the Sonoma Journal chronicled a pilgrimage to the site. Interesting is the that the name of the mountain was then referred to as Patrick Peak, a reference to Patrick Murphy. Today the name of the peak is Mount Murphy.

While not related to the of Church of Latter-Day Saints, the first book to be published in the State of California with a Copyright was the "The Fruits of Mormonism" by Nelson Slater. Published by Harmon and Springer on October 25, 1851. Harmon and Springer were publishers of the El Dorado News in Coloma from 1851-1853.[5]



FRUITS

OF

MORMONISM,

OR

A FAIR AND CANDID STATEMENT OF FACTS ILLUSTRATIVE OF MORMON PRINCIPLES, MORMON POLICY, AND MORMON CHARACTER.

BY MORE THAN FORTY EYE-WITNESSES;

COMPILED BY

N. SLATER, A. M.

COLOMA, CAL.
HARMON & SPRINGER.
1851.

Chapter 7

Chinese Church

Chinese Church

1873

- First recorded mention of the Chinese Church, deed to Wong Wo from Judge Irwin.

1883

- Chinatown burns for the second time sparing Wo Hop's store and the Chinese church.

1897

- Listed for lien sale by El Dorado County.

1900

- Pearly Monroe purchases this property from El Dorado County.

1902

- Chinatown again burns destroying the Chinese church now owned by Pearly Monroe. Pearly states that the building was not insured.

1948

- Property is purchased through condemnation procedures by the State of California.

Chinese Church or Joss House

Coloma had one of the five Chinese churches in El Dorado County with the others being in Cold Springs, White Rock Canyon, and Placerville having two.[1]

While to date no photos have been located that show the inside or outside views of the Coloma Joss House, the above photo of the 1895 Atlanta Exposition gives an example that what the interior may have looked like.[2]

3

Placerville's last Joss House as photographed circa 1918. Its entrance is similar to other Joss Houses found around the state.

A term that is used to describe the Chinese church is "Joss House or Temple, Joss was a Pidgin English word meaning "deity." This was derived from the Portuguese term for God, "deus," and was often used by Westerners and Westernized Chinese in connection with Chinese religion.

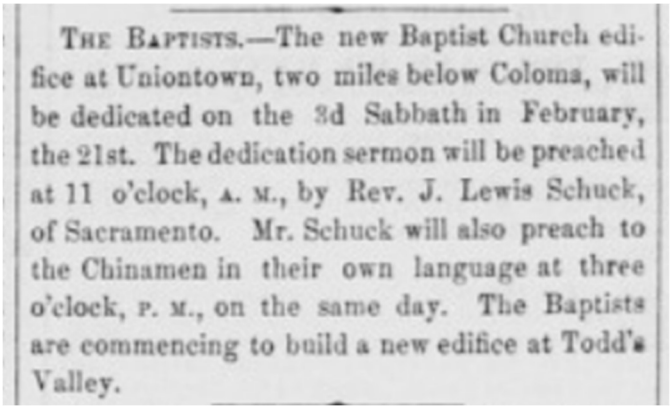
Joss House meant any kind of Confucianism, Buddhist, or Daoist (Taoist) temple.[4]

Historical information on the Coloma Chinese Church or Joss House is quite scarce. The Chinese population in Coloma peaked around 1880 with a population of 336. In comparison the white population was recorded at 514.[5]

Whereas some Joss Houses in California had a priest to maintain the church we have been unable to determine if the Coloma church ever had a priest.[6]

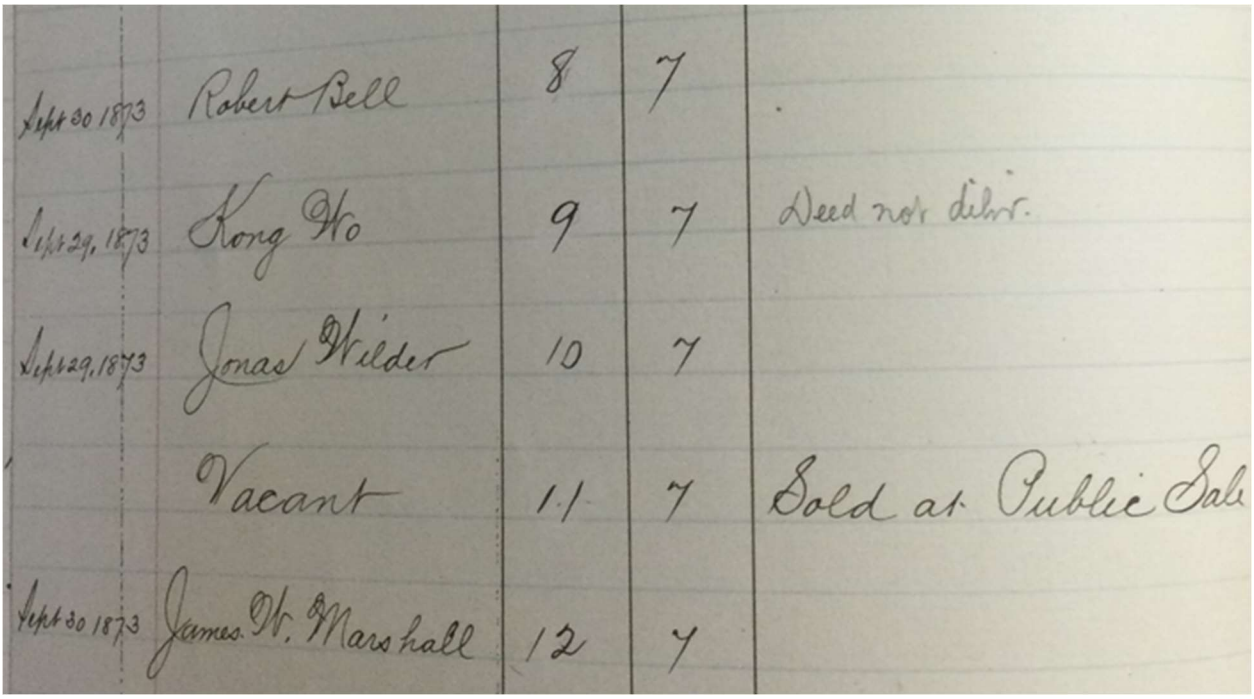
During March of 1861, a riot fueled by alcohol and hatred against the Chinese let by Mr. O'Donnell and forty of his sympathizers destroyed most of Chinatown with a reported damage of over $10,000.00 or $375,000.00 in 2024.[7] Where the Chinese worshiped at this time or if there was another temple is unknown.

The first and only mention found of a Chinese religious service in the area was on February 21, 1858, when the Rev. J. Lewis Schuck of Sacramento dedicated the Uniontown Baptist church and gave a sermon to the Chinese in their own language during a special afternoon service.[8] (see Baptist Church chapter for Rev. Schuck's biography).



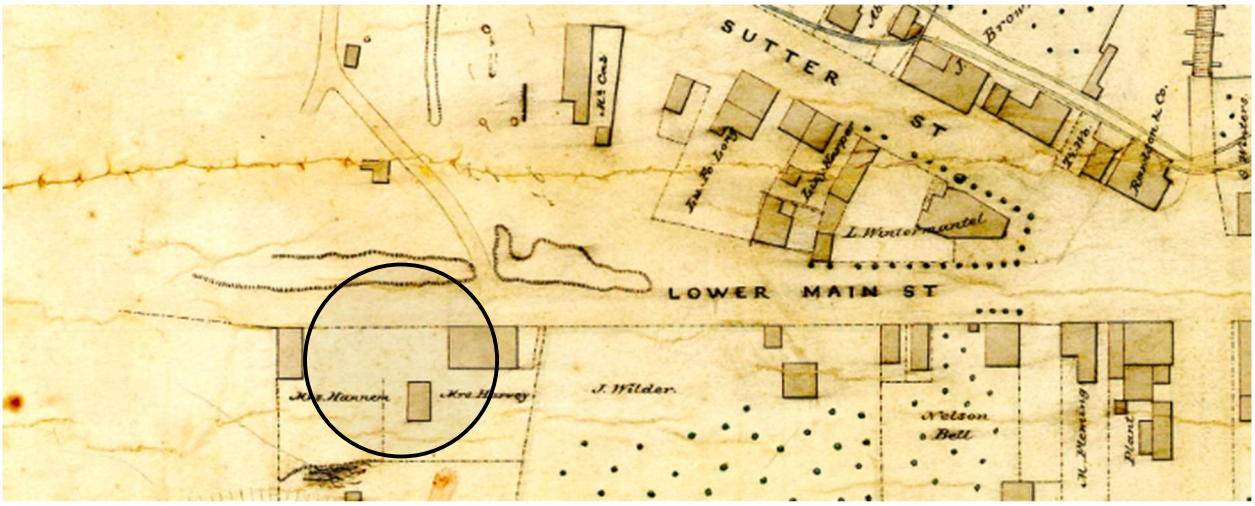
THE BAPTISTS.—The new Baptist Church edifice at Uniontown, two miles below Coloma, will be dedicated on the 3d Sabbath in February, the 21st. The dedication sermon will be preached at 11 o'clock, A. M., by Rev. J. Lewis Schuck, of Sacramento. Mr. Schuck will also preach to the Chinamen in their own language at three o'clock, P. M., on the same day. The Baptists are commencing to build a new edifice at Todd's Valley.

What is known is that the Chinese church first appears in the 1873 Coloma survey map but is not mentioned in the November 1869 deed from Williams to Wilson where they describe the neighboring parcels and owners There is no recorded deed naming the Chinese Church lot as such.[9] However in the recorded deed book of Judge Charles Irwin found on page 98 he lists lot 9 block 7, deeded to Kong Wo on August 29, 1873. The notation of "no deed delivered" is puzzling as Kong Wo's name only again appears in the County Clerk/Recorders records in the "Notice of Pending Action" prior to the State's acquisition in 1948. Nowhere is any information found that describes this as a gift or sale from John Wilson to Kong Wo.[10]



Sept 30 1873	Robert Bell	8	7	
Sept 29, 1873	Kong Wo	9	7	Deed not deliv.
Sept 29, 1873	Jonas Wilder	10	7	
	Vacant	11	7	Sold at Public Sale
Sept 30 1873	James W. Marshall	12	7	

From Judge Irwin's 1873-79 logbook of deeds



Approximate location of the Chinese Joss House on the 1857 Coloma Map

Location of Chinese on Lot 9 in Block 7 on a modern plot map

Location of Chinese Joss House overlaid onto Herman Au 1857 map with 2023 Hwy. 49 map using ArcGIS Pro.

While there is a Chinese cemetery on state park property, at this time the relationship between the Chinese church and cemetery has not been documented or researched.

In 1883 a fire destroys most of Coloma's Chinatown. The *Mountain Democrat* reports the Chinese church and Wo Hop's store are the only buildings to survive.

A note from Coloma dated August 16th sav This af ternoon the whole of Chinatown was burned to the ground ex cepting Ng Hop s store and the Joss house This leaves but little of the historic old town stan ding [11]

A DYNAMITE BOMB.

One Exploded in a Chinese Store at Coloma.

PLACERVILLE, Aug. 16.—An explosion of what is supposed to have been a dynamite bomb occurred at Coloma last night, which set on fire the Chinese store of Lin Hing and injured three Chinamen, one perhaps fatally. The Chinese were first attracted by a fizzling noise and a light in the store, and as one was about to throw the object out the explosion occurred. The perpetrator is not yet apprehended.

August of 1895 finds another attempt to burn Chinatown with an attempted dynamiting of the Chinese store of Lin Hing, injuring three and killing one which set fire to the store's interior. No one was arrested.[12]

In the June 5, 1897, edition of the *Mountain Democrat* lists the Chinese Church and lot 9, block 7 being in arrears for taxes and pending lien sale.

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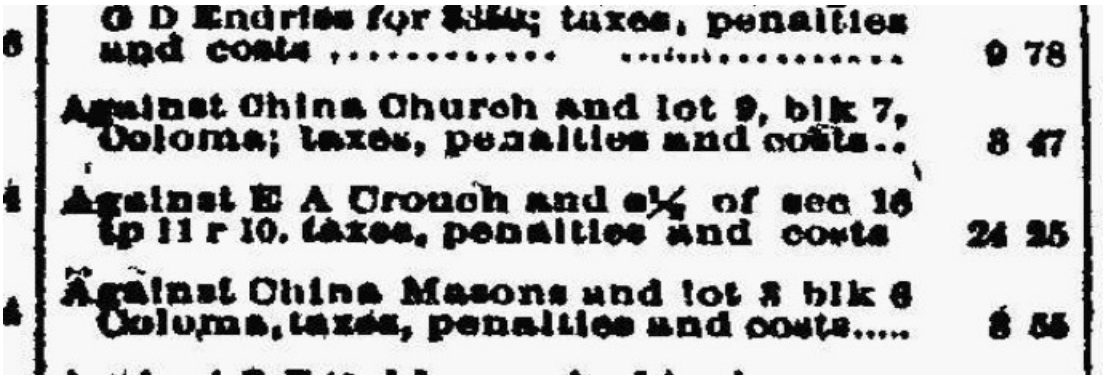


6	G D Endries for $35[illegible]; taxes, penalties and costs	9 78
	Against China Church and lot 9, blk 7, Coloma; taxes, penalties and costs..	8 47
4	Against E A Crouch and e½ of sec 16 tp 11 r 10. taxes, penalities and costs	24 25
4	Against China Masons and lot 3 blk 6 Coloma, taxes, penalties and costs.....	8 55

Also listed in arrears was the Chinese Masonic Hall that was located on the opposite side of Lower Main Street on lot 3, block 6. Little is known about this Masonic Hall. The relationship between the two Chinese groups is unknown but included with this church history.

The Chinese Masons are believed to have been an offshoot of Hung society in China; in California the Chinese formed a group called the "Yee Hing Secret Society" that was also known as the Chinese Masonic Society. It headquarters was established in San Francisco with branches in 390 towns in the US, Canada, Spanish Americas. These branches were also referred by the Chinese as "Chee Kung Tong."[13]

Location of the Chinese Church and the Chinese Masonic Hall on Lower Main Steet.

While no documents have been found detailing the rites or use of the Coloma Chinese Church, Pauline Minke wrote the following in her 1960, *Chinese of the Mother Lode (1850-1870) report* detailing other Chinese churches in Gold Rush California.[14]

The Chinese as a race are intensely religious, and this held true back in the early mining era. Wherever they went they carried with them the faith of their fathers and the shrines of their favorite and patron gods. No matter how temporary their abode, they would immediately set up an altar for the object of their faith. Consequently there was a temple wherever a number of Chinese were found. At one time, Chinese Camp had three Joss houses in town, large structures filled with carvings and images covered with gold leaf--rich and surprisingly luxurious, but, by a strange contrast, provided with no floor but the hard-packed earth.[17] These beautiful things were paid for by the Chinese laborers out of the few cents a day that they made at their labor. There was no stated time for worship; their votaries arranged their own time for paying homage to the sacred shrines. The josses were nothing more than deified men who, while living, had rendered great service to their country.[16]

The Chinese used charms and other superstitious means to avert the anger of their gods and prevent the malicious injuries to themselves and their families by evil spirits.

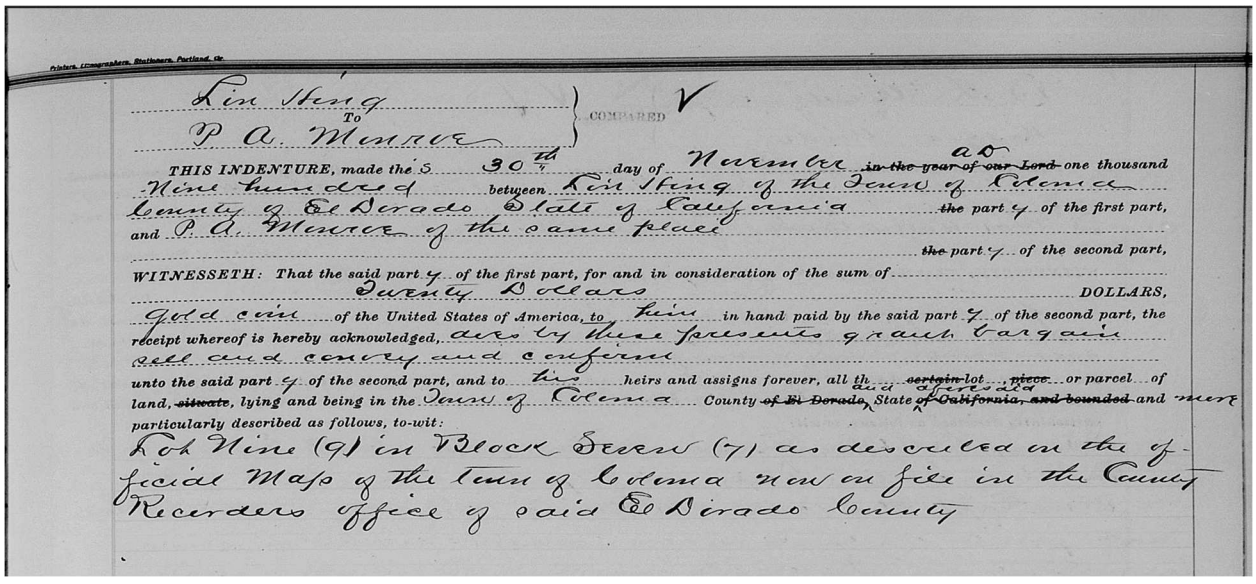
The characteristic and favorite religion of the Chinese was the worship of ancestors and the spirits of the dead. The elaborate and, to the white miners' way of thinking, outlandish ceremonies which they practised in this worship further set them apart from any community in which they found themselves. Eyewitness accounts of a typical Chinese funeral in the early mining camps reveal the interest engendered by these strange proceedings. One eyewitness tells of how every American attending the funeral of one Kwong Wo, a prominent Chinese merchant, was given a ten cent piece and some incense for good luck. Boys old enough to know better would line up in the procession, get their ten cents, then crawl through the fence and get at the end of the procession again to receive another dime. When a funeral was held, the road to the grave was strewn with hundreds of strips of perforated red paper, the theory being that evil spirits had to pass through all of the holes before reaching the soul of the departed. Roast pork and many other foods were always left at the grave. The foods were taken to the cemetery in the early morning, left throughout the day so that the spirits could consume as much as they desired, then taken back to the camp and devoured by the mourners in the evening.

Bodies did not rest many years in this country. Periodically the remains were exhumed and sent back to China to remain

forever among their ancestors. Another eyewitness account of an exhumation relates:

> A priest or important official would come from San Francisco. He would walk slowly, single file, with several others to the graveyard. They wore fine Chinese clothing and hung bright-colored banners on the shrubs around the grave they had come to open. Then they chanted and gestured for a time. The officials brought Chinese laborers to do the actual digging but they were most particular to see that every tiny bone was gathered. A piece of silk was spread at one side of the grave and the bones placed on that. When every single one was found and accounted for they were placed in a small wooden box which was given to the Chinese priest with a good deal of ceremony and they all went back to Chinatown. The box was always the length of the human thigh-bone; the contents were scraped clean and the cue was carefully placed on top just before the box was sealed.[19]

Only the bones of the men were disinterred. Where the women were buried was immaterial.



Printers, Lithographers, Stationers, Portland, Or.

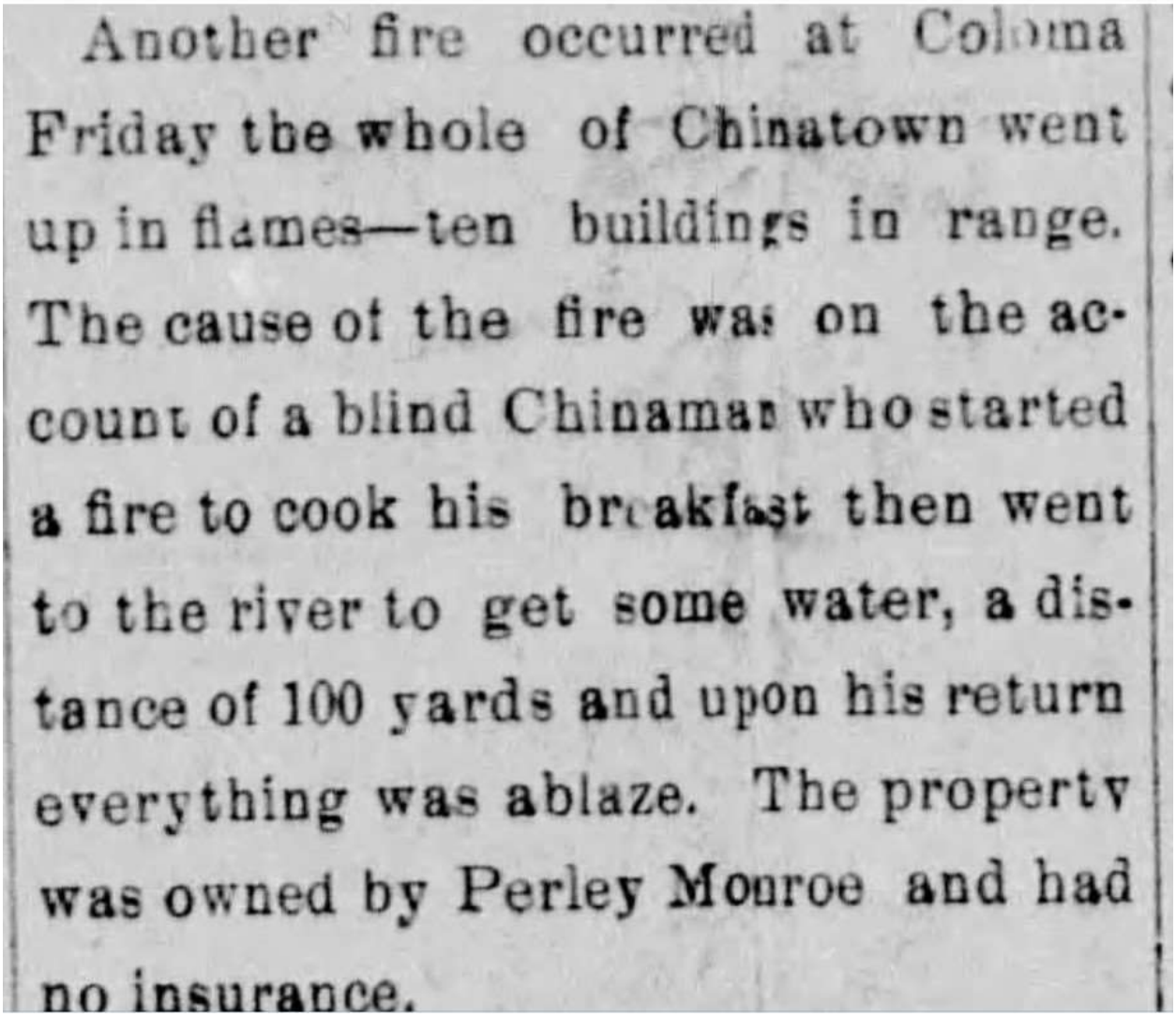
Lin Sing
To
P A. Monroe
COMPARED ✓

THIS INDENTURE, made the 30th day of November ~~in the year of our Lord~~ A.D. one thousand Nine hundred and between Lin Sing of the Town of Coloma County of El Dorado State of California ~~the~~ part y of the first part, and P. A. Monroe of the same place ~~the~~ part y of the second part,

WITNESSETH: That the said part y of the first part, for and in consideration of the sum of Twenty Dollars DOLLARS, Gold coin of the United States of America, to him in hand paid by the said part y of the second part, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, ~~ar~~ by these presents grant bargain sell and convey and confirm unto the said part y of the second part, and to his heirs and assigns forever, all th ~~certain~~ lot piece or parcel of land, ~~situate~~, lying and being in the Town of Coloma County ~~of El Dorado~~, State ~~of California, and bounded~~ and more particularly described as follows, to-wit:

Lot Nine (9) in Block Seven (7) as described on the official Map of the Town of Coloma now on file in the County Recorders Office of said El Dorado County

Sale of Chinese church lot to Pearly Monroe in 1900.[15]



Another fire occurred at Coloma Friday the whole of Chinatown went up in flames—ten buildings in range. The cause of the fire was on the account of a blind Chinaman who started a fire to cook his breakfast then went to the river to get some water, a distance of 100 yards and upon his return everything was ablaze. The property was owned by Perley Monroe and had no insurance.

16

In August of 1902 Coloma's Chinatown was completely destroyed by an accidentely caused fire.

The lot that once was the home of the Chinese Church was purchased from Pearly Monroe by the State of California for inclusion in the new park in the initial Condemnation of Lands in 1948.[17]

Endnotes

Intoroduction

[1]*James W. Marshall, The Discoverer of California Gold, A Biography*, Theresa Gay, page 244.
[2] *Sacramento Union*, August 15, 1885, page 2.

Chapter 1, African Methodist Episcopal Church

[1] Will O Upton, *Churches of El Dorado County*, 1940, page 41.
[2] *Pacific Appeal,* June 6, 1863, page 3.
[3] *Pacific Appeal*, Communications, June 6, 1863, page 3.
[4] Richard Wright, *Centennial Encyclopedia of the African Methodist Episcopal Church,* 1911, page 237.
[5] *United States of America, Congressional Record*, September 6, 2000, page E1409-1410.
[6] Rudolph M. Lapp, *Blacks in Gold Rush California*, 1977, page 165.
[7] Ensum Celeste Han*, All Roads lead to San Francisco: Black Californian Networks of Community and the Struggle for Equality, 1849-1877*. Dissertation, Brown University May 2015. California Digital Newspaper Collection, www.cdnc.ucr.edu, *Pacific Appeal 1862-1880*, *The Elevator, 1865-1898.*
[8] *Proceedings from the California State Convention of Colored Citizens*, 1865, October 25-29, page 23.
[9] Compared all editions of *Pacific Appeal and the Elevator* newspapers, via search at the online California Digital Newspaper Collection
[10]Deed of Trust, 3/13/1858, Jacob Johnson to Nancy Gooch, Book F, page 176.
[11] El Dorado County Recorder Clerk's book of deeds book J pages 257-259.
[12] El Dorado County Recorder/Clerk's book J, page 257-260.
[13] *Journal of Proceedings of the Third Annual Convention of the Ministers and Lay Delegates of the African Episcopal Church, San Francisco Sept. 4-10th, 1863*, page 5.
[14] B.F. Lee, *An Outline of the History and Government of the African Methodist Churches, Ministerial and Lay*, 1884 page 199. www.Onlinebooks.library.open.
[15] 1863 Correspondence from Rev. TMD Ward to Issac Owen. Methodist Archives. Berkeley, CA.
[16] Letter from Bishop Campbell to Bishop Weaver, Virginia City, Feb.16, 1865, re- printed in the *Christian Recorder*, April 15, 1865. Sourced from Accessible Archives.
[17] *Journal of Proceedings of the Third Annual Convention of the Ministers and Lay Delegates of the African Episcopal Church,* San Francisco Sept. 4-10th, 1863, pages 19 & 23
[18] Richard Wright, *Centennial Encyclopedia of the African Methodist Episcopal Church,*, Page 119.
[19] Will O. Upton, Churches of El Dorado County, pages 20 &21, 42
[20] Ancestry.com, Peter Killingsworth search.
[21] Deed of Trust, 7/31/1865, from the Trustees of the AME Church of Placerville to W.H. Cooper. El Dorado County Recorder Clerk, Book J, pages 600-601.
[22] Appeal to the Friends of TMD Ward, *Pacific Appeal*, volume 4, Number 1, April 3, 1868.
[23] Rudolph M. Lapp, *Blacks in Gold Rush California*,1977, pages 164-165.
[24] Richard Wright, *Centennial Encyclopedia of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*, Page 606.
[25] Plot Map of Coloma, El Dorado County Surveyor's Office.
[26] Deed of Trust from C.H. and Mary Williams to John Wilson, El Dorado County Recorder Clerk, Book of Deeds, Book M, page 268.
[27] Jennie Beard, Coloma's Historic One-Room school House, *El Dorado Hills Style Magazine, pages 3-4, March 16, 2016.*
[28] *Growing Up,* Bishop Amos Miller, page 16
[29] Judge Irwin's deed book, page 98, Inter-County Title Co. (Tom Chandler, Chief Title Office).

[30] Judge Irwin's deed book, page 98, Inter-County Title Co. (Tom Chandler, Chief Title Office).
[31] Deed of Trust, 7/9/1879 for Lot 4, Block 7, Chas Irwin, Judge to Rufus M. Burgess, El Dorado County Recorder Clerk, Book of Deeds, Book P, page 77.
[32] Deed of Trust, 6/26/1879 for Lot 3, Block 7, George Ingham to Rufus M. Burgess, EL Dorado County Recorder Clerk, Book of Deeds, Book V, page 607-608.
[33] Baptism Record of Rufus Morgan Burgess Jr. by Thomas Murrish, Methodist Episcopal Church. Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park library.
[34] Death certificate for Annie Burgess by Stephen Smith, Methodist Episcopal Church, Marshall Gold Discovery State Historical Park library.
[35] Death notice for Rufus Burgess of Coloma, *Georgetown Gazette*, July 25th, 1900.
[36] Death notice for Peter Julian, *The Weekly Nugget*, Placerville, April 21, 1903, page 1, Elisabeth Julian, Obituary, *Mt. Democrat and Week & Placerville Times*, March 24, 1902, page 3.
[37] Death notice for Josephine Burgess, *Mt. Democrat & Placerville Times*, December 30, 1921, page 3.
[38] Notice of Impending Action, State of California, El Dorado County Recorder Clerk Book 254, page 205.
[39] Photo by Jeff Lee, 2023.
[40] *A History of Black Americans in California, AME Church*, National Park Service, 2004 nps.gov/history/online_books/5views/5views2a.htm.

Chapter 2, Methodist Episcopal Church
[1] *James W. Marshall, The Discoverer of California Gold, A Biography*, Theresa Gay, 1967, page 269.
[2] United States Congressional Record, Sept.6, 2008, pages E1409-10.
[3] *1863 Colored Ministers Report*, TMD Ward to Issac Owen. Methodists Archives, Berkeley, CA.
[4] *1863 Colored Ministers Report*, TMD Ward to Issac Owen. Methodists Archives, Berkeley, CA.
[5] Find a Grave.com, Rev. Issac Owen.
[6] Online History Journal of San Cruz County, Elihu Anthony, 1818-1905.
[7] Rev. C.V. Anthony, *Fifty Years of Methodism a History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1901, page 22.
[8] Wikipedia, 1880 State Senate photo.
[9] William Roberts photo courtesy of Methodist Archives, Berkeley, CA.
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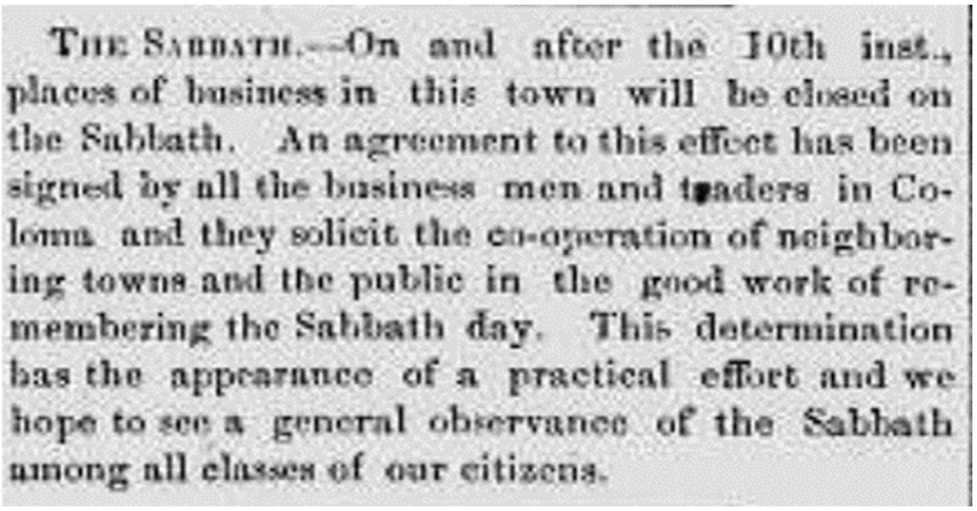

THE SABBATH.—On and after the 10th inst., places of business in this town will be closed on the Sabbath. An agreement to this effect has been signed by all the business men and traders in Coloma and they solicit the co-operation of neighboring towns and the public in the good work of remembering the Sabbath day. This determination has the appearance of a practical effort and we hope to see a general observance of the Sabbath among all classes of our citizens.

Empire County Argus
December 2, 1854

After months of public meetings at the Coloma Courthouse those debating this topic finalized this agreement requiring all business to be closed on Sundays. Less than a year later the agreement was no longer enforced.